JANUARY

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# THE CAPTAIN

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EDITOR, "THE OLD FAG." ATHLETIC EDITOR, P. F. WARNER.

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Vol. XIV. No. 82. JANUARY, 1906


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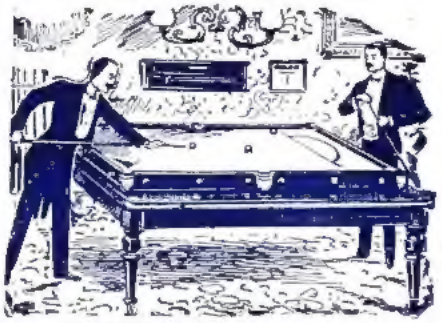

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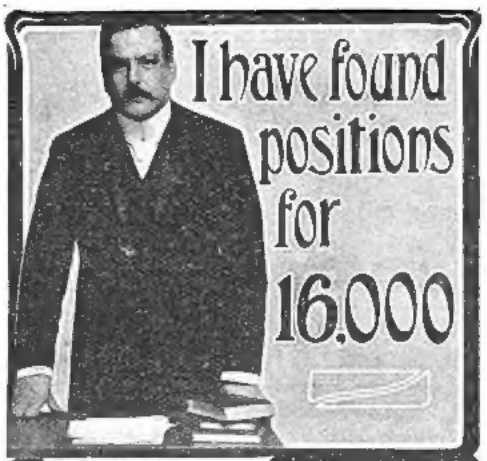


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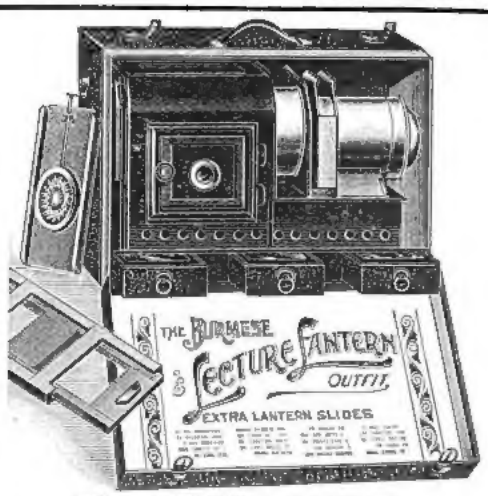


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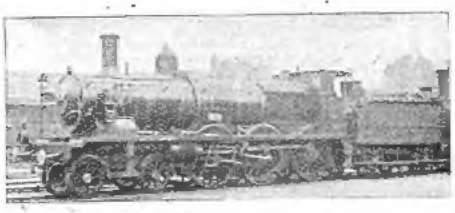

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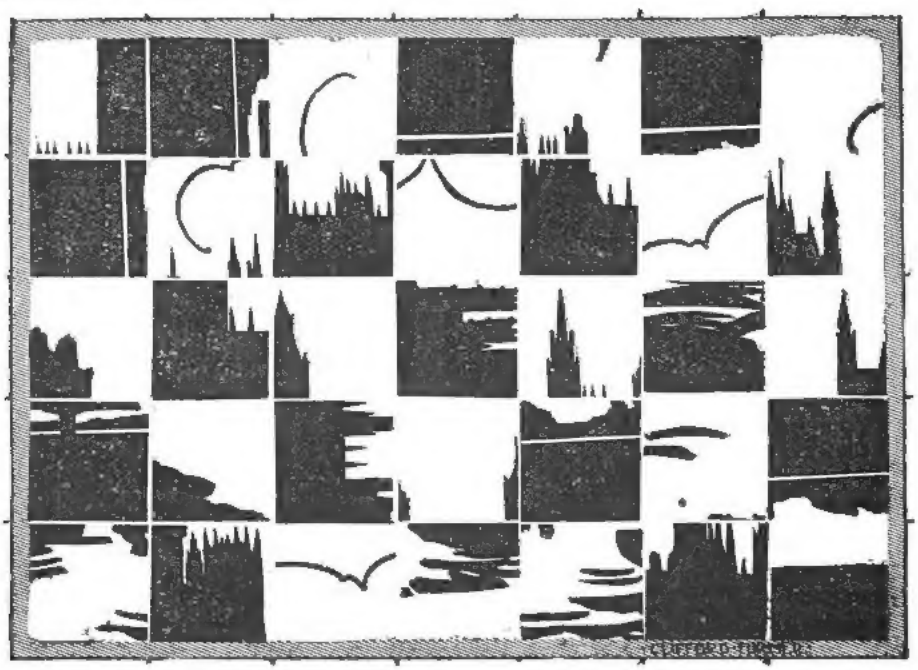

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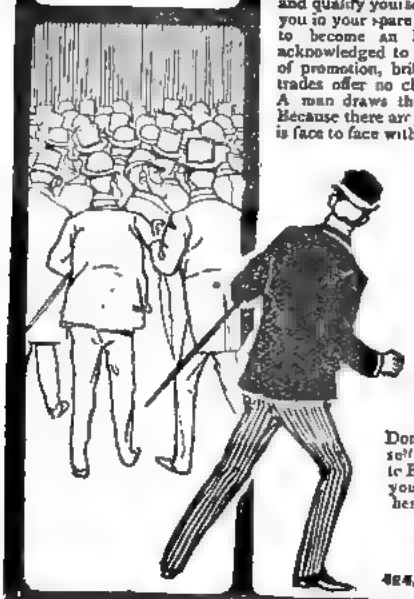

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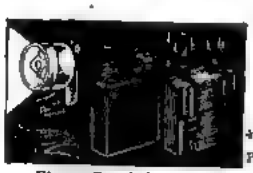

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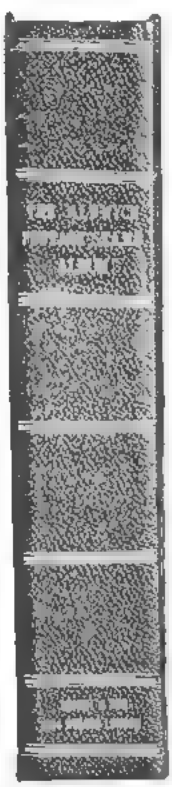

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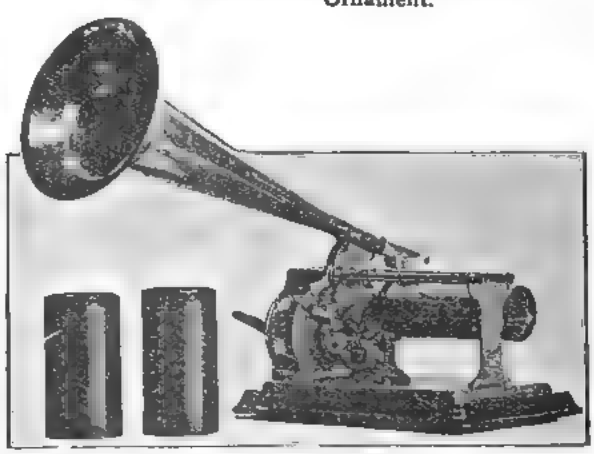

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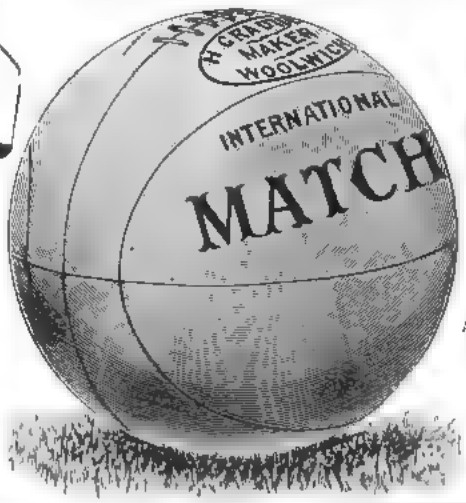


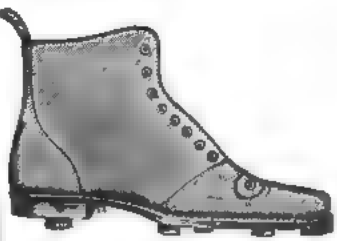

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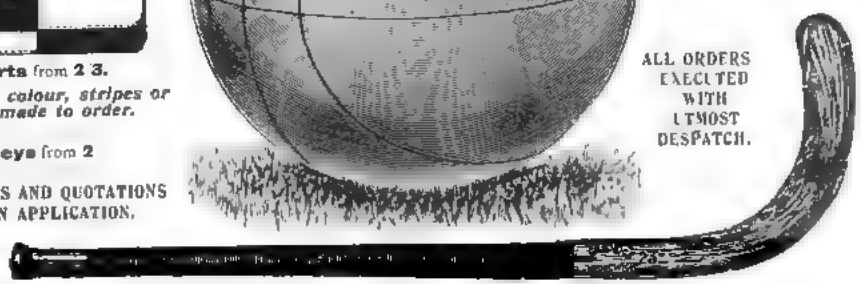

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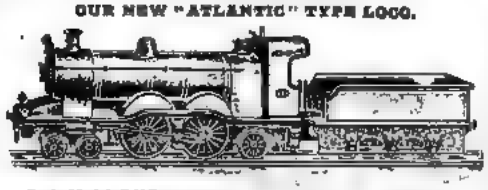

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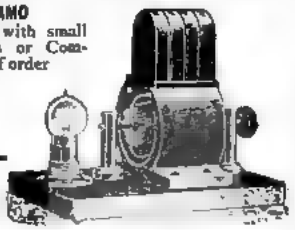

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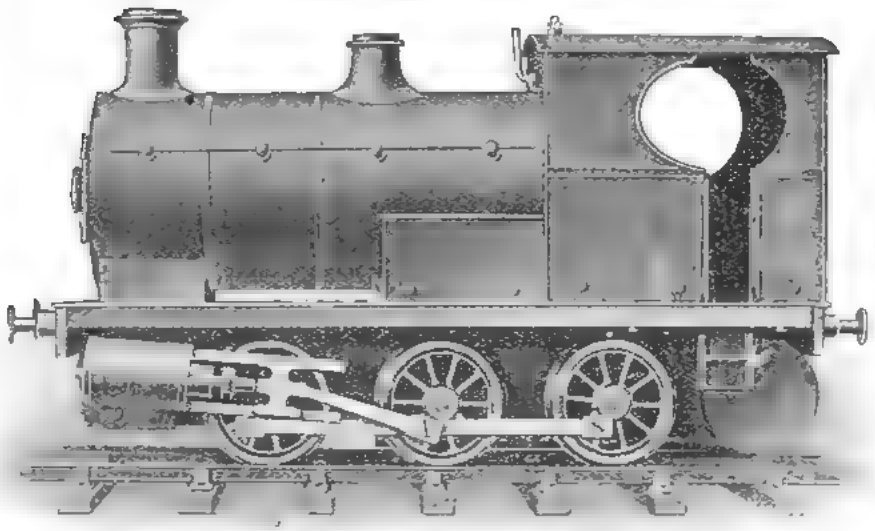

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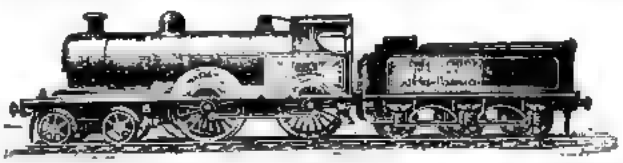

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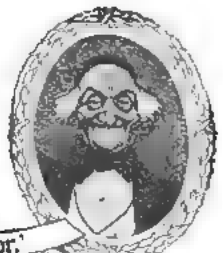

Editor, The Old Fag.

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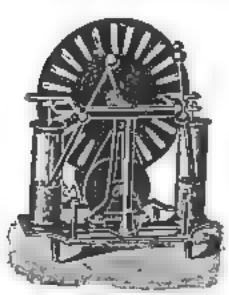

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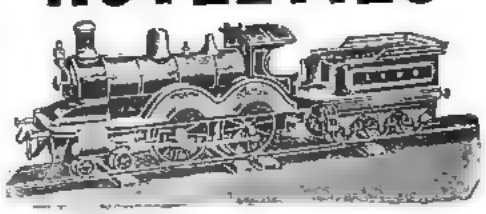

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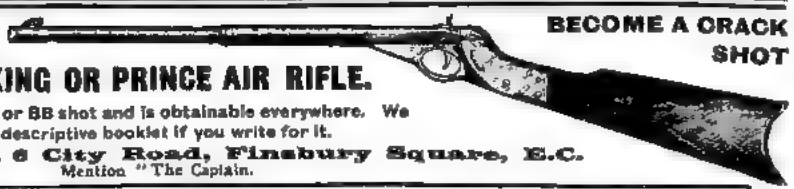

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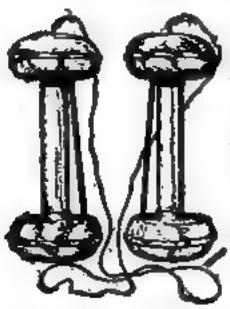

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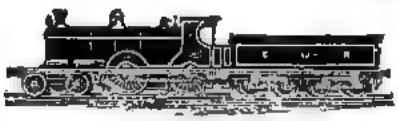

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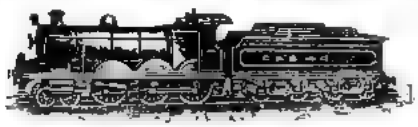

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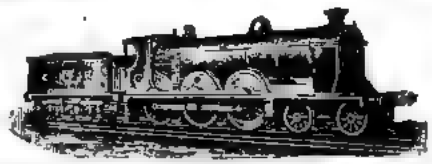

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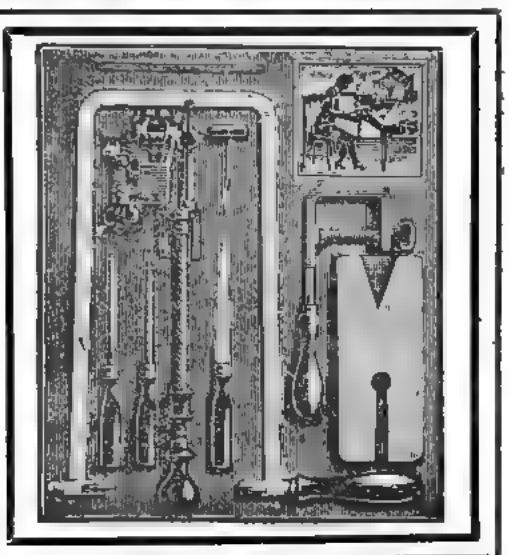

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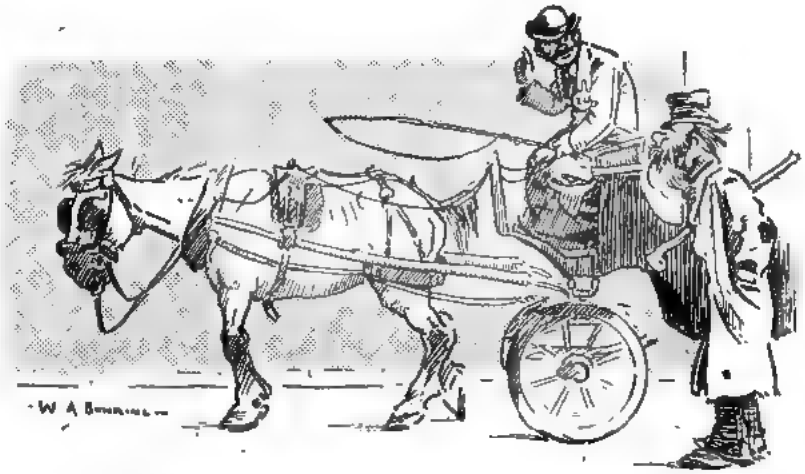

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THE CAPTAIN

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*Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.*

### SYNOPSIS.

SHEEN, of the Sixth Form at Wrykyn School, shows the white feather by shirking his part in a row, during election time, with a gang of town boys headed by "Albert"—a particularly offensive young "hooligan." As a result, there is not only coolness between Sheen and his friend Drummond, the school's best boxer, but the former is deliberately cut by all. Later, Sheen meets the redoubtable Albert in the town, when alone. In desperation he stands up to the enemy pluckily, but is promptly "outed," and saved from further damage only by the timely intervention of Joe Bevan, an ex-champion pugilist who has training-quarters at the "Blue Boar" up the river. At Bevan's suggestion Sheen agrees to receive boxing lessons, secretly determining to win the house boxing competition, and so retrieve himself in the eyes of Seymour's. The "Blue Boar" is out of bounds, but Sheen takes the risk of detection and enters upon his course of lessons. Under Bevan's tuition, he not only improves rapidly, but gains self-confidence. In reply to an insult, he hits Attell, another senior, on the jaw; but Attell, by an ingenious lie, spreads the report that the blow came from himself and that Sheen "funked" again. Dunstable and Linton, having made a surreptitious journey up the river to tea at the "Blue Boar," are pursued by Albert and another lad, who sink the Wrykinians' boat. The latter take possession of another boat which is moored to the bank: with the result that Sheen, when starting to return from his customary boxing lesson, three-quarters of an hour before lock-up, finds himself without a boat.

### CHAPTER XIII.

*DEUS EX MACHINA.*

IT did not occur to Sheen immediately that his boat had actually gone. The full beauty of the situation was some moments in coming home to him. At first he merely thought that somebody had moved it to another part of the bank, as the authorities at the inn had done once or twice in the past, to make room for the boats of fresh visitors. Walking along the lawn in search of it, he came upon the stake to which Dunstable's submerged craft was attached. He gave the rope a tentative pull, and was surprised to find that there was a heavy drag on the end of it.

Then suddenly the truth flashed across him. "Heavens!" he cried, "it's sunk."

Joe Bevan, who was with him, lent his aid to the pulling. The lost boat came out of the river like some huge fish, and finally rested on the bank, oozing water and drenching the grass in all directions.

Joe Bevan stooped down, and examined it in the dim light.

"What's happened here, sir," he said, "is that there's a plank gone from the bottom. Smashed clean out, it is. Not started it isn't. Smashed clean out. That's what it is. Some one must have been here and done it."

Sheen looked at the boat, and saw that he was right. A plank in the middle had been splintered. It looked as if somebody had driven some heavy instrument into it. As a matter of fact, Albert had effected the job with the butt-end of an oar.

The damage was not ruinous. A carpenter could put the thing right at no great expense. But it would take time. And meanwhile the minutes were flying, and lock-up was now little more than half an hour away.

"What'll you do, sir?" asked Bevan.

That was just what Sheen was asking himself. What could he do? The road to the school twisted and turned to such an extent that, though the distance from the "Blue Boar" to Seymour's was only a couple of miles as the crow flies, he would have to cover double that distance unless he took a short cut across the fields. And if he took a short cut in the dark he was certain to lose himself. It was a choice of evils. The "Blue Boar" possessed but one horse and trap, and he had seen that driven away to the station in charge of a fisherman's luggage half an hour before.

"I shall have to walk," he said.

"It's a long way. You'll be late, won't you?" said Mr. Bevan.

"It can't be helped. I suppose I shall. I wonder who smashed that boat," he added after a pause.

Passing through the inn on his way to the road, he made inquiries. It appeared that two young gentlemen from the school had been there to tea. They had arrived in a boat and gone away in a boat. Nobody else had come into the inn. Suspicion obviously rested upon them.

"Do you remember anything about them?" asked Sheen.

Further details came out. One of the pair had worn a cap like Sheen's. The other's headgear, minutely described, showed him that its owner was a member of the school second eleven.

Sheen pursued the inquiry. He would be so late in any case that a minute or so more or less would make no material difference; and he was very anxious to find out, if possible, who it was that had placed him in this difficulty. He knew, of course, that he was unpopular in the school, but he had not looked for this sort of thing.

Then somebody suddenly remembered having heard one of the pair address the other by name.

"What name?" asked Sheen.

His informant was not sure. Would it be Lindon?

"Linton?" said Sheen.

That was it.

Sheen thanked him, and departed, still puzzled. Linton, as he knew him, was not the sort of fellow to do a thing like that. And the other, the second eleven man, must be Dunstable. They were always about together. He did not know much about Dunstable, but he could hardly believe that this sort of thing was his form, either. Well, he would have to think of that later. He must concentrate himself now on covering the distance to the school in the minimum of time. He looked at his watch. Twenty minutes more. If he hurried, he might not be so very late. He wished that somebody would come by in a cart, and give him a lift.

He stopped and listened. No sound of horse's hoof broke the silence. He walked on again.

Then, faint at first, but growing stronger every instant, there came from some point in the road far behind him a steady, droning sound. He almost shouted with joy. A motor! Even now he might do it.

But could he stop it? Would the motorist pay any attention to him, or would he flash past and leave him in the dust? From the rate at which the drone increased the car seemed to be travelling at a rare speed.

He moved to one side of the road, and waited. He could see the lights now, flying towards him.

Then, as the car hummed past, he recognised its driver, and put all he knew into a shout.

"Bruce!" he cried.

For a moment it seemed as if he had not been heard. The driver paid not the smallest attention, as far as he could see. He looked neither to left nor to right. Then the car slowed down, and, turning, came slowly back to where he stood.

"Hullo," said the driver, "who's that?"

Jack Bruce was alone in the car, muffled to the eyes in an overcoat. It was more by his general appearance than his face that Sheen had recognised him.

"It's me. Sheen. I say, Bruce, I wish you'd give me a lift to Seymour's, will you?"

There was never any waste of words about Jack Bruce. Of all the six hundred and thirty-four boys at Wrykyn he was probably the only one whose next remark in such circumstances would not have been a question. Bruce seldom asked questions—never, if they wasted time.

"Hop in," he said.

Sheen consulted his watch again.

"Lock-up's in a quarter of an hour," he said, "but they give us ten minutes' grace. That allows us plenty of time, doesn't it?"

"Do it in seven minutes, if you like."

"Don't hurry," said Sheen. "I've never been in a motor before, and I don't want to cut the experience short. It's awfully good of you to give me a lift."

"That's all right," said Bruce.

"Were you going anywhere? Am I taking you out of your way?"

"No. I was just trying the car. It's a new one. The pater's just got it."

"Do you do much of this?" said Sheen.

"Good bit. I'm going in for the motor business when I leave school."

"So all this is training?"

"That's it."

There was a pause.

"You seemed to be going at a good pace just now," said Sheen.

"About thirty miles an hour. I was on the third speed."

"That's faster than you're allowed to go, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"You've never been caught, have you?"

"Not yet. I want to see how much pace I can get out of her, because it'll prove useful when the election really comes on. Bringing voters to the poll, you know. That's why the pater bought this new car. It's a beauty. His other's only a little runabout."

"Doesn't your father mind your motoring?"

"Likes it," said Jack Bruce.

It seemed to Sheen that it was about time that he volunteered some information about himself, instead of plying his companion with questions. It was pleasant talking to a Wrykinian again; and Jack Bruce had apparently either not heard of the Albert incident or else he was not influenced by it in any way.

"You've got me out of an awful hole, Bruce," he began.

"That's all right. Been out for a walk?"

"I'd been to the 'Blue Boar.'"

"Oh?" said Bruce. He did not seem to wish to know why Sheen had been there.

Sheen proceeded to explain.

"I suppose you've heard all about me," he said uncomfortably. "About the town, you know. That fight Not joining in."

"Heard something about it," said Bruce.

"I went down town again after that," said Sheen, "and met the same fellows who were fighting Linton and the others. They came for me, and I was getting awfully mauled when Joe Bevan turned up."

"Oh, is Joe back again?"

"Do you know him?" asked Sheen in surprise.

"Oh yes. I used to go to the 'Blue Boar' to learn boxing from him all last summer holidays."

"Did you really? Why, that's what I'm doing now."

"Good man," said Bruce..

"Isn't he a splendid teacher!"

"Ripping."

"But I didn't know you boxed, Bruce. You never went in for any of the School competitions."

"I'm rather a rotten weight. Ten six. Too heavy for the light-weights and not heavy enough for the middles. Besides, the competitions here are really inter-house. They don't want day-boys going in for them. Are you going to box for Seymour's?"

"That's what I want to do. You see, it would be rather a score, wouldn't it? After what's happened, you know."

"I suppose it would."

"I should like to do something. It's not very pleasant," he added, with a forced laugh, "being considered a disgrace to the house, and cut by every one."

"Suppose not."

"The difficulty is Drummond. You see, we are both the same weight, and he's much better than I am. I'm hoping that he'll go in for the middles and let me take the light-weights. There's nobody he couldn't beat in the middles, though he would be giving away a stone."

"Have you asked him?"

"Not yet. I want to keep it dark that I'm learning to box, just at present."

"Spring it on them suddenly?"

"Yes. Of course, I can't let it get about that I go to Joe Bevan, because I have to break bounds every time I do it."

"The upper river's out of bounds now for boarders, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Jack Bruce sat in silence for a while, his gaze concentrated on the road in front of him.

"Why go by river at all?" he said at last. "If you like, I'll run you to the 'Blue Boar' in the motor every day."

"Oh, I say, that's awfully decent of you," said Sheen.

"I should like to see old Joe again. I think I'll come and spar, too. If you're learning, what you want more than anything is somebody about your own size to box with."

"That's just what Joe was saying. Will you really? I should be awfully glad if you would. Boxing with Joe is all right, but you feel all the time he's fooling with you. I should like to try how I got on with somebody else."

"You'd better meet me here, then, as soon after school as you can."

As he spoke, the car stopped.

"Where are we?" asked Sheen.

"Just at the corner of the road behind the houses"

"YOUR BOAT!" SAID LINTON.

"Oh, I know. Hullo, there goes the lock-up bell. I shall do it comfortably."

He jumped down.

"I say, Bruce," he said, "I really am most awfully obliged for the lift. Something went wrong with my boat, and I couldn't get back in it. I should have been frightfully in the cart if you hadn't come by."

"That's all right," said Jack Bruce. "I say, Sheen!"

"Hullo?"

"Are you going to practise in the music-room after morning school to-morrow?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I think I'll turn up."

"I wish you would."

"What's that thing that goes like this? I forget most of it."

He whistled a few bars.

"That's a thing of Grieg's," said Sheen.

"You might play it to-morrow," said Bruce.

"Rather. Of course I will."

"Thanks," said Jack Bruce. "Good-night."

He turned the car, and vanished down the road. From the sound Sheen judged that he was once more travelling at a higher rate of speed than the local police would have approved.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A SKIRMISH.

UPON consideration Sheen determined to see Linton about that small matter of the boat without delay. After prayers that night he went to his study.

"Can I speak to you for a minute, Linton?" he said.

Linton was surprised. He disapproved of this intrusion. When a fellow is being cut by the house, he ought, by all the laws of school etiquette, to behave as such, and not speak till he is spoken to.

"What do you want?" asked Linton.

"I shan't keep you long. Do you think you could put away that book for a minute, and listen?"

Linton hesitated, then shut the book.

"Hurry up, then," he said.

"I was going to," said Sheen. "I simply came in to tell you that I know perfectly well who sunk my boat this afternoon."

He felt at once that he had now got Linton's undivided attention.

"Your boat!" said Linton. "You don't mean to say that was yours! What on earth were you doing at the place?"

"I don't think that's any business of yours, is it, Linton?"

"How did you get back?"

"I don't think that's any business of yours, either. I daresay you're disappointed, but I did manage to get back. In time for lock-up, too."

"But I don't understand. Do you mean to say that that was your boat we took?"

"Sunk," corrected Sheen.

"Don't be a fool, Sheen. What the dickens should we want to sink your boat for? What happened was this. Albert—you remember Albert?—followed us up to the inn, and smashed our boat while we were having tea. When we got out and found it sunk, we bagged the only other one we could see. We hadn't a notion it was yours. We thought it belonged to some fisherman chap."

"Then you didn't sink my boat?"

"Of course we didn't. What do you take us for?"

"Sorry," said Sheen. "I thought it was a queer thing for you to have done. I'm glad it wasn't you. Good-night."

"But look here," said Linton, "don't go. It must have landed you in a frightful hole, didn't it?"

"A little. But it doesn't matter. Good-night."

"But half a second, Sheen——"

Sheen had disappeared.

Linton sat on till the lights were turned off, ruminating He had a very tender conscience where other members of the school were concerned, though it was tougher as regarded masters; and he was full of remorse at the thought of how nearly he had got Sheen into trouble by borrowing his boat that afternoon. It seemed to him that it was his duty to make it up to him in some way.

It was characteristic of Linton that the episode did not, in any way, alter his attitude towards Sheen. Another boy in a similar position might have become effusively friendly. Linton looked on the affair in a calm, judicial spirit. He had done Sheen a bad turn, but that was no reason why he should fling himself on his neck and swear eternal friendship. His demeanour on the occasions when they came in contact with each other remained the same. He did not speak to him, and he did not seem to see him. But all the while he was remembering that somehow or other he must do him a good turn of some sort, by way of levelling things up again. When that good turn had been done, he might dismiss him from his thoughts altogether.

Sheen, for his part, made no attempt to trade on the matter of the boat. He seemed as little anxious to be friendly with Linton as Linton was to be friendly with him. For this Linton was grateful, and continued to keep his eyes open in the hope of finding some opportunity of squaring up matters between them.

His chance was not long in coming. The feeling in the house against Sheen, caused by the story of his encounter with Attell, had not diminished. Stanning had fostered it in various little ways. It was not difficult. When a house of the standing in the school which Seymour's possessed exhibits a weak spot, the rest of the school do not require a great deal of encouragement to go on prodding that weak spot. In short, the school rotted Seymour's about Sheen, and Seymour's raged impotently. Fags of other houses expended much crude satire on Seymour's fags, and even the seniors of the house came in for their share of the baiting. Most of the houses at Wrykyn were jealous of Seymour's, and this struck them as an admirable opportunity of getting something of their own back.

One afternoon, not long after Sheen's conversation with Linton, Stanning came into Seymour's senior day-room and sat down on the table. The senior day-room objected to members of other houses coming and sitting on their table as if they had bought that rickety piece of furniture; but Stanning's reputation as a bruiser kept their resentment within bounds.

"Hullo, you chaps," said Stanning.

The members of the senior day-room made no reply, but continued, as Mr. Kipling has it, to persecute their vocations. Most of them were brewing. They went on brewing with the earnest concentration of *chefs*.

"You're a cheery lot," said Stanning. "But I don't wonder you've got the hump. I should be a bit sick if we'd got a skunk like that in our house. Heard the latest?"

Some lunatic said, "No. What?" thereby delivering the day-room bound into the hands of the enemy.

"Sheen's apologised to Attell."

There was a sensation in the senior day-room, as Stanning had expected. He knew his men. He was perfectly aware that any story which centred round Sheen's cowardice would be believed by them, so he had not troubled to invent a lie which it would be difficult to disprove. He knew that in the present state of feeling in the house Sheen would not be given a hearing.

"No!" shouted the senior day-room.

This was the last straw. The fellow seemed to go out of his way to lower the prestige of the house.

"Fact," said Stanning. "I thought you knew."

He continued to sit on the table, swinging his legs, while the full horror of his story sunk into the senior day-room mind.

"I wonder you don't do something about it. Why don't you touch him up? He's not a prefect."

But they were not prepared to go to that length. The senior day-room had a great respect both for Drummond's word and his skill with his hands. He had said he would slay any one who touched Sheen, and they were of opinion that he would do it.

"He isn't in," said one of the brewers, looking up from his toasting-fork. "His study door was open when I passed."

"I say, why not rag his study?" suggested another thickly, through a mouthful of toast.

Stanning smiled.

"Good idea," he said.

It struck him that some small upheaval of Sheen's study furniture, coupled with the burning of one or two books, might check to some extent that student's work for the Gotford. And if Sheen could be stopped working for the Gotford, he, Stanning, would romp home. In the matter of brilliance there was no comparison between them. It was Sheen's painful habit of work which made him dangerous.

Linton had been listening to this conversation in silence. He had come to the senior day-room to borrow a book. He now slipped out, and made his way to Drummond's study.

Drummond was in. Linton proceeded to business.

"I say, Drummond."

"Hullo?"

"That man Stanning has come in. He's getting the senior day-room to rag Sheen's study."

"What!"

Linton repeated his statement.

"Does the man think he owns the house?" said Drummond. "Where is he?"

"Coming up now. I hear them What are you going to do? Stop them?"

"What do you think? Of course I am. I'm not going to have any of Appleby's crew coming into Seymour's and ragging studies."

"This ought to be worth seeing," said Linton. "Look on me as 'Charles, his friend.' I'll help if you want me, but it's your scene."

Drummond opened his door just as Stanning and his myrmidons were passing it.

"Hullo, Stanning," he said.

Stanning turned. The punitive expedition stopped.

"Do you want anything?" inquired Drummond politely.

The members of the senior day-room who were with Stanning rallied round, silent and interested. This dramatic situation appealed to them. They had a passion for rows, and this looked distinctly promising.

There was a pause. Stanning looked carefully at Drummond. Drummond looked carefully at Stanning.

"I was going to see Sheen," said Stanning at length.

"He isn't in."

"Oh."

Another pause.

"Was it anything special?" inquired Drummond pleasantly.

The expedition edged a little forward.

"No. Oh, no. Nothing special," said Stanning.

The expedition looked disappointed.

"Any message I can give him?" asked Drummond.

"No, thanks," said Stanning.

"Sure?"

"Quite, thanks."

"I don't think it's worth while your waiting. He may not be in for some time."

"No, perhaps not. Thanks. So long."

"So long."

Stanning turned on his heel, and walked away down the passage. Drummond went back into his study, and shut the door.

The expedition, deprived of its commander-in-chief, paused irresolutely outside. Then it followed its leader's example.

There was peace in the passage.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE ROUT AT RIPTON.

ON the Saturday following this episode the first fifteen travelled to Ripton to play the return match with that school on its own ground. Of the two Ripton matches the one played at Wrykyn was always the big event of the football year; but the other came next in importance, and the telegram which was despatched to the school shop at the close of the game was always awaited with anxiety. This year Wrykyn looked forward to the return match with a certain amount of apathy, due partly to the fact that the school was in a slack, unpatriotic state, and partly to the hammering the team had received in the previous term, when the Ripton centre three-quarters had run through and scored with monotonous regularity. "We're bound to get sat on," was the general verdict of the school.

Allardyce, while thoroughly agreeing with

this opinion, did his best to conceal the fact from the rest of the team. He had certainly done his duty by them. Every day for the past fortnight the forwards and outsides had turned out to run and pass, and on the Saturdays there had been matches with Corpus, Oxford, and the Cambridge Old Wrykinians. In both games the school had been beaten In fact, it seemed as if they could only perform really well when they had no opponents. To see the three-quarters racing down the field (at practice) and scoring innumerable (imaginary) tries, one was apt to be misled into considering them a fine quartette. But when there was a match, all the beautiful dash and precision of the passing faded away, and the last thing they did was to run straight. Barry was the only one of the four who played the game properly.

But, as regarded condition, there was nothing wrong with the team. Even Trevor could not have made them train harder; ane Allardyce in his more sand guine moments had a shadowy hope that the Ripton score might, with care, be kept in the teens.

Barry had bought a *Sportsman* at the station, and he unfolded it as the train began to move. Searching the left-hand column of the middle page, as we all do when we buy the *Sportsman* on Saturday—to see how our names look in print, and what sort of a team the enemy has got—he made a remarkable discovery. At the same moment Drummond, on the other side of the carriage, did the same.

"I say," he said, "they must have had a big clear-out at Ripton. Have you seen the team they've got out to-day?"

"I was just looking at it," said Barry.

"What's up with it?" inquired Allardyce. "Let's have a look."

"They've only got about half their proper team. They've got a different back—Grey isn't playing."

"Both their centres are, though," said Drummond.

"More fun for us, Drum., old chap," said Attell. "I'm going home again. Stop the train."

Drummond said nothing. He hated Attell most when he tried to be facetious.

"I WAS GOING TO SEE SHEEN," SAID STANNING.

"Dunn isn't playing, nor is Waite," said Barry, "so they haven't got either of their proper halves. I say, we might have a chance of doing something to-day."

"Of course we shall," said Allardyce. "You've only got to buck up and we've got them on toast."

The atmosphere in the carriage became charged with optimism. It seemed a simple thing to defeat a side which was practically a Ripton "A" team. The centre three-

quarters were there still, it was true, but Allardyce and Drummond ought to be able to prevent the halves ever getting the ball out to them. The team looked on those two unknown halves as timid novices, who would lose their heads at the kick-off. As a matter of fact, the system of football teaching at Ripton was so perfect and the keenness so great that the second fifteen was nearly as good as the first every year. But the Wrykyn team did not know this, with the exception of Allardyce, who kept his knowledge to himself; and they arrived at Ripton jaunty and confident.

Keith, the Ripton captain, who was one of the centre three-quarters who had made so many holes in the Wrykyn defence in the previous term, met the team at the station, and walked up to the school with them, carrying Allardyce's bag.

"You seem to have lost a good many men at Christmas," said Allardyce. "We were reading the *Sportsman* in the train. Apparently, you've only got ten of your last term's lot. Have they all left?"

The Ripton captain grinned ruefully.

"Not much," he replied. "They're all here. All except Dunn. You remember Dunn? Little thick-set chap who played half. He always had his hair quite tidy and parted exactly in the middle all through the game."

"Oh yes, I remember Dunn. What's he doing now?"

"Gone to Cooper's Hill. Rot, his not going to the 'Varsity. He'd have walked into his blue."

Allardyce agreed. He had marked Dunn in the match of the previous term, and that immaculate sportsman had made things not a little warm for him.

"Where are all the others, then?" he asked. "Where's that other half of yours? And the rest of the forwards?"

"Mumps," said Keith.

"What!"

"It's a fact. Rot, isn't it? We've had a regular bout of it. Twenty fellows got it altogether. Naturally, four of those were in the team. That's the way things happen. I only wonder the whole scrum didn't have it."

"What beastly luck," said Allardyce. "We had measles like that a couple of years ago in the summer term, and had to play the Incogs and Zingari with a sort of second eleven. We got mopped."

"That's what we shall get this afternoon, I'm afraid," said Keith.

"Oh no," said Allardyce. "Of course you won't."

And, as events turned out, that was one of the truest remarks he had ever made in his life.

One of the drawbacks to playing Ripton on its own ground was the crowd. Another was the fact that one generally got beaten. But your sportsman can put up with defeat. What he does not like is a crowd that regards him as a subtle blend of incompetent idiot and malicious scoundrel and says so very loud and clear. It was not, of course, the school that did this. They spent their time blushing for the shouters. It was the patriotic inhabitants of Ripton town who made the school wish that they could be saved from their friends. The football ground at Ripton was at the edge of the school fields, separated from the road by narrow iron railings; and along these railings the choicest spirits of the town would line up, and smoke and yell and spit and yell again. As Wordsworth wrote, "There are two voices." They were on something like the following lines.

Inside the railings: "Sch-oo-oo-oo-oo-l! Buck up Sch-oo-oo-oo-oo-l!! Get it OUT, Schoo-oo-oo-oo-l!!!!"

Outside the railings: "Gow it, Ripton! That's the way, Ripton! Twist his good-old-English-adjectived neck, Ripton! Sit on his forcibly described head, Ripton! Gow it, Ripton! Haw, Haw, Haw! They ain't no use, RIPTON! Kick 'im in the eye, RIPTON! Haw, Haw, Haw!"

The bursts of merriment signalised the violent downfall of some dangerous opponent.

The school loathed these humble supporters, and occasionally fastidious juniors would go to the length of throwing chunks of mud at them through the railings. But nothing discouraged them or abated their fervid desire to see the school win. Every year they seemed to increase in zeal, and they were always in great form at the Wrykyn match.

It would be charitable to ascribe to this reason the gruesome happenings of that afternoon. They needed some explaining away.

Allardyce won the toss, and chose to start downhill, with the wind in his favour. It is always best to get these advantages at the beginning of the game. If one starts against the wind, it usually changes ends at half-time. Amidst a roar from both touch-lines, and a volley of howls from the road, a Ripton forward kicked off. The ball flew in the direction of Stanning, on the right wing. A storm of laughter arose from the road as he dropped it.

The first scrum was formed on the Wrykyn twenty-five line.

The Ripton forwards got the ball, and heeled with their usual neatness. The Ripton half who was taking the scrum gathered it cleanly, and passed to his colleague. He was a sturdy youth with a dark, rather forbidding, face, in which the acute observer might have read signs of the savage. He was of the breed which is vaguely described at public schools as "nigger," a term covering every variety of shade from ebony to light lemon. As a matter of fact he was a half-caste, sent home to England to be educated. Drummond recognised him as he dived forward to tackle him. The last place where they had met had been the roped ring at Aldershot. It was his opponent in the final bout of the Feathers.

THEY FELL TOGETHER, AND THE BALL BOUNDED FORWARD.

He reached him as he swerved, and they fell together. The ball bounded forward.

"Hullo, Peteiro," he said. "Thought you'd left."

The other grinned recognition.

"Hullo, Drummond."

"Going up to Aldershot this year?"

"Yes. Light weight."

"So am I"

The scrum had formed by now, and further conversation was impossible. Drummond looked a little thoughtful as he put the ball in. He had been told that Peteiro was leaving Ripton at Christmas. It was a nuisance his being still at school. Drummond was not afraid of him—he would have fought a champion of the world if the school had expected him to—but he could not help remembering that it was only by the very narrowest margin, and after a terrific three rounds, that he had beaten him in the Feathers the year before. It would be too awful for words if the decision were to be reversed in the coming competition.

But he was not allowed much leisure for pondering on the future. The present was too full of incident and excitement. The withdrawal of the four invalids and the departure of Dunn had not reduced the Ripton team to that wreck of its former self which the Wrykyn fifteen had looked for. On the contrary, their play seemed, if anything, a shade better than it had been in the former match. There was all the old aggressiveness, and Peteiro and his partner, so far from being timid novices and losing their heads, eclipsed the exhibition given at Wrykyn by Waite and Dunn. Play had only been in progress six minutes when Keith, taking a pass on the twenty-five line, slipped past Attell, ran round the back, and scored between the posts. Three minutes later the other Ripton centre scored. At the end of twenty minutes the Wrykyn line had been crossed five times, and each of the tries had been converted.

"*Can't* you fellows get that ball in the scrum?" demanded Allardyce plaintively, as the team began for the fifth time the old familiar walk to the half-way line. "Pack tight, and get the first shove."

The result of this address was to increase the Ripton lead by four points. In his anxiety to get the ball one of the Wrykyn forwards started heeling before it was in, and the referee promptly gave a free kick to Ripton for "foot up." As this event took place

within easy reach of the Wrykyn goal, and immediately in front of the same, Keith had no difficulty in bringing off the penalty.

By half-time the crowd in the road, hoarse with laughter, had exhausted all their adjectives and were repeating themselves. The Ripton score was six goals, a penalty goal, and two tries to *nil*, and the Wrykyn team was a demoralised rabble.

The fact that the rate of scoring slackened somewhat after the interval may be attributed to the disinclination of the Riptonians to exert themselves unduly. They ceased playing in the stern and scientific spirit in which they had started; and, instead of adhering to an orthodox game, began to enjoy themselves. The forwards no longer heeled like a machine. They broke through ambitiously, and tried to score on their own account. When the outsides got as far as the back, they did not pass. They tried to drop goals. In this way only twenty-two points were scored after half-time. Allardyce and Drummond battled on nobly, but with their pack hopelessly outclassed it was impossible for them to do anything of material use. Barry, on the wing, tackled his man whenever the latter got the ball, but, as a rule, the centres did not pass, but attacked by themselves. At last, by way of a fitting conclusion to the rout, the Ripton back, catching a high punt, ran instead of kicking, and, to the huge delight of the town contingent, scored. With this incident the visiting team drained the last dregs of the bitter cup. Humiliation could go no further. Almost immediately afterwards the referee blew his whistle for "No side."

"Three cheers for Wrykyn," said Keith.

To the fifteen victims it sounded ironical.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DRUMMOND GOES INTO RETIREMENT.

THE return journey of a school team after a crushing defeat in a foreign match is never a very exhilarating business. Those members of the side who have not yet received their colours are wondering which of them is to be sacrificed to popular indignation and "chucked": the rest, who have managed to get their caps, are feeling that even now two-thirds of the school will be saying that they are not worth a place in the third fifteen; while the captain, brooding apart, is becoming soured at the thought that Posterity will forget what little good he may have done, and remember only that it was in his year that the school got so many points taken off them by so-and-so. Conversation does not ripple and sparkle during these home-comings. The Wrykyn team made the journey in almost unbroken silence. They were all stiff and sore, and their feelings were such as to unfit them for talking to people.

The school took the thing very philosophically—a bad sign. When a school is in a healthy, normal condition it should be stirred up by a bad defeat by another school like a disturbed wasps' nest. Wrykyn made one or two remarks about people who could not play footer for toffee, and then let the thing drop.

Sheen was too busy with his work and his boxing to have much leisure for mourning over this latest example of the present inefficiency of the school. The examination for the Gotford was to come off in two days, and the inter-house boxing was fixed for the following Wednesday. In five days, therefore, he would get his chance of retrieving his lost place in the school. He was certain that he could, at any rate, make a very good show against any one in the school, even Drummond. Joe Bevan was delighted with his progress, and quoted Shakespeare volubly in his admiration. Jack Bruce and Francis added their tribute, and the knife and boot boy paid him the neatest compliment of all by refusing point-blank to have any more dealings with him whatsoever. His professional duties, explained the knife and boot boy, did not include being punched in the heye by blokes, and he did not intend to be put upon.

"You'll do all right," said Jack Bruce, as they were motoring home, "if they'll let you go in for it at all. But how do you know they will? Have they chosen the men yet?"

"Not yet. They don't do it till the day before. But there won't be any difficulty about that. Drummond will let me have a shot if he thinks I'm good enough."

"Oh, you're good enough," said Bruce.

And when, on the Monday evening, Francis, on receipt of no fewer than four blows in a single round—a record, shook him by the hand and said that if ever he happened to want a leetle darg that was a perfect bag of tricks and had got a pedigree, mind you, he, Francis, would be proud to supply that animal, Sheen felt that the moment had come to approach Drummond on the subject of the house boxing. It would be a little awkward at first, and conversation would probably run somewhat stiffly; but all would be well when once he had explained himself.

But things had been happening in his absence

which complicated the situation. Allardyce was having tea with Drummond, who had been stopping in with a sore throat. He had come principally to make arrangements for the match between his house and Seymour's in the semi-final round of the competition.

"You're looking bad," he said, taking a seat.

"I'm feeling bad," said Drummond. For the past few days he had been very much out of sorts. He put it down to a chill caught after the Ripton match. He had never mustered up sufficient courage to sponge himself with cold water after soaking in a hot bath, and he occasionally suffered for it.

"What's up?" inquired Allardyce.

"Oh, I don't know. Sort of beastly feeling. Sore throat. Nothing much. Only it makes you feel rather rotten."

Allardyce looked interested.

"I say," he said, "it looks as if—I wonder. I hope you haven't."

"What?"

"Mumps. It sounds jolly like it."

"Mumps! Of course I've not Why should I?"

Allardyce produced a letter from his pocket. "I got this from Keith, the Ripton captain, this morning. You know they've had a lot of the thing there. Oh, didn't you? That was why they had such a bad team out."'

"Bad team!" murmured Drummond.

"Well, I mean not their best team. They had four of their men down with mumps. Here's what Keith says. Listen. Bit about hoping we got back all right, and so on, first. Then he says—here it is. 'Another of our fellows has got the mumps. One of the forwards; rather a long man who was good out of touch. He developed it a couple of days after the match. It's lucky that all our card games are over We beat John's, Oxford, last Wednesday, and that finished the card. But it'll rather rot up the House matches. We should have walked the cup, but there's no knowing what will happen now. I hope none of your lot caught the mumps from Browning during the game. It's quite likely, of course. Browning ought not to have been playing, but I had no notion that there was anything wrong with him. He never said he felt bad.' You've got it, Drummond. That's what's the matter with you."

"Oh, rot," said Drummond. "It's only a chill."

But the school doctor, who had looked in at the house to dose a small Seymourite who had indulged too heartily in the pleasures of the table, had other views, and before lock-up Drummond was hurried off to the infirmary.

Sheen went to Drummond's study after preparation had begun, and was surprised to find him out. Not being on speaking terms with a single member of the house, he was always out-of-date as regarded items of school news. As a rule he had to wait until Jack Bruce told him before learning of any occurrence of interest. He had no notion that mumps was the cause of Drummond's absence, and he sat and waited patiently for him in his study till the bell rang for prayers. The only possible explanation that occurred to him was that Drummond was in somebody

SHEEN REASONED WITH THE SPORTIVE YOUTH.

else's study, and he could not put this theory to the test by going and looking. It was only when Drummond did not put in an appearance at prayers that Sheen began to suspect that something might have happened.

It was maddening not being able to make inquiries. He had almost decided to go and ask Linton, and risk whatever might be the consequences of such a step, when he remembered that the matron must know. He went to her, and was told that Drummond was in the infirmary.

He could not help seeing that this made his position a great deal more difficult. In ten minutes he could have explained matters to Drummond, if he had found him in his study. But it would be a more difficult task to put the thing clearly in a letter.

Meanwhile, it was bed-time, and he soon found his hands too full with his dormitory to enable him to think out the phrasing of that letter. The dormitory, which was recruited entirely from the junior day-room, had heard of Drummond's departure with rejoicings. They liked Drummond, but he was a good deal too fond of the iron hand for their tastes. A night with Sheen in charge should prove a welcome change.

A deafening uproar was going on when Sheen arrived, and as he came into the room somebody turned the gas out. He found some matches on the chest of drawers, and lit it again just in time to see a sportive youth tearing the clothes off his bed and piling them on the floor. A month before he would not have known how to grapple with such a situation, but his evenings with Joe Bevan had given him the habit of making up his mind and acting rapidly. Drummond was wont to keep a swagger-stick by his bedside for the better observance of law and order. Sheen possessed himself of this swagger-stick, and reasoned with the sportive youth. The rest of the dormitory looked on in interested silence. It was a critical moment, and on his handling of it depended Sheen's victory or defeat. If he did not keep his head he was lost. A dormitory is merciless to a prefect whose weakness they have discovered.

Sheen kept his head. In a quiet, pleasant voice, fingering the swagger-stick, as he spoke, in an absent manner, he requested his young friend to re-make the bed—rapidly and completely. For the space of five minutes no sound broke the silence except the rustle of sheets and blankets. At the end of that period the bed looked as good as new.

"Thanks," said Sheen gratefully. "That's very kind of you."

He turned to the rest of the dormitory.

"Don't let me detain you," he said politely. "Get into bed as soon as you like."

The dormitory got into bed sooner than they liked. For some reason the colossal rag they had planned had fizzled out. They were thoughtful as they crept between the sheets. Could these things be?

After much deliberation Sheen sent his letter to Drummond on the following day. It was not a long letter, but it was carefully worded. It explained that he had taken up boxing of late, and ended with a request that he might be allowed to act as Drummond's understudy in the House competitions.

It was late that evening when the infirmary attendant came over with the answer.

Like the original letter, the answer was brief.

"Dear Sheen," wrote Drummond, "thanks for the offer. I am afraid I can't accept it. We must have the best man. Linton is going to box for the House in the light weights."

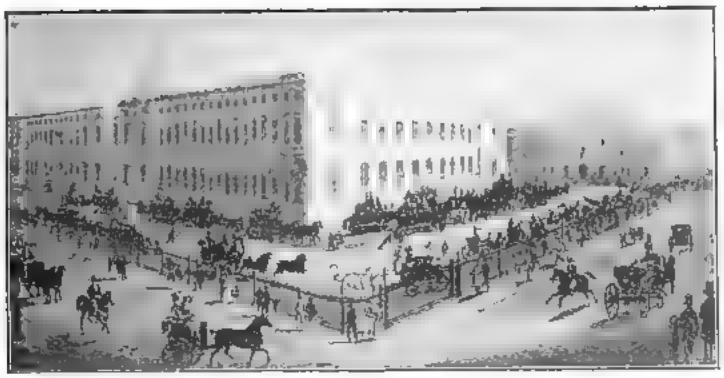
*(To be continued.)*

## JANUARY EVENTS.

**The Penny Post.**

Of interest to everybody, whether stamp collector or not, is the introduction of the penny postage system into England.

For some considerable time before this event there had been in this country a recognised method for the transmission of letters, which was known as "franking"; but this being open to much abuse, it was generally admitted that there was considerable room for improvement. Letter postage was a very much dearer thing in those days, a letter costing from ninepence to a shilling to send. There were no railroads then, and the only means of carriage were very slow mail coaches. Letters were three or four days old before they reached their destination; and, in many cases, they never reached their destination at all.



THE NEW POST OFFICE, ST. MARTIN-LE-GRAND, BUILT 1825–29, SHOWING THE MAIL COACHES PREPARING TO START.
From a drawing by Lollard in 1832.

From all these things Mr. Rowland Hill, the son of a Birmingham schoolmaster, in 1837, conceived the idea that if the price of letter carrying were greatly reduced, and the amount for transmission prepaid, many more letters would be sent. This would provide the means for improved carriage, and, besides being a great boon to the poor, would in time increase instead of diminish the Government revenue.

For some time Post Office officials and the ministers laughed at the scheme, but, in 1839 the Second Parliament of Queen Victoria agreed to it, and allowed it to appear as part of the Budget. It was not until 1840, however, that the new system came into complete force, and the price of letters of a certain weight was reduced to a uniform rate of a penny; the amount (as before stated) to be prepaid. All letters that had been paid for were stamped with a similar design, and from this the little pieces of paper which were affixed to the envelopes came to be called "stamps."

England, therefore, has the credit of inventing and bringing into use the postage stamp.

CHARLES BURROWS.

**Spion Kop.**

SPION KOP looms dark and forbidding on this night of January 23, 1900. Below its frowning shadow eager men march softly, swiftly—to capture from the Boers the position so valuable to them. Thorneycroft's Horse and the Lancashire lads strain their eyes to pierce the gloom.

"Wie gaat da?" They hold their breath.

"Waterloo!" the British countersign. Then the magnificent full-throated chorus of the Lancashire men! The Boers fly from the line of steel, and Spion Kop is carried.

In the gloom that overhangs the plateau the engineers toil unceasingly. Mightily do they labour to secure the position, but the mist rolls away, and—there is no shelter.

Their number lessens every minute, but what matters it? Those left still hang together, and before the hill shall be in possession of the Boers there will be fewer still.

Woodgate hit, and the pent-up men cry and gabble inarticulately in their futile rage against the invisible enemy. Ever nearer the circle of flame—louder the roar of the guns!

Little bands of men leap up amid the awful shower, and charge desperately—rush on the hidden marksmen with those death-dealing rifles. They fall, but the rest pay trebly for their loss.

The indomitable Thorneycroft works heroically. But even he, at last, recognises the impossibility of his task, and orders retreat.

Silent and grim is that procession. A weary, sadly depleted force stumbles back. Silence reigns on corpse-strewn Spion Kop.

LEONARD ARTHUR PAVEY.

SIR ROWLAND HILL, FOUNDER OF THE PENNY POST.
From the painting by G. Winter, in the National Portrait Gallery. Photo: Rischgitz.

**The Battle of Corunna.**

Soon after the Battle of Vimiera, in 1808, Sir Moore was appointed to the command of 20,000 men, who were to help the Spaniards drive the French from the north of Spain. On November 11 he crossed the frontier into Leon, and advanced by Ciudad Rodrigo to Salamanca.

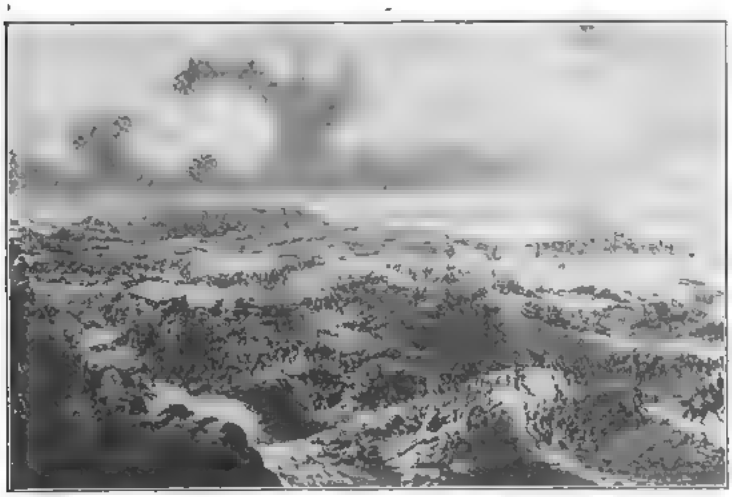
Meanwhile, Napoleon had entered Spain at the head of some troops, and, having replaced his brother at Madrid, on December 4 started to seek Sir John Moore. The latter had discovered that there was no Spanish force on which he could rely for support, and he therefore determined to retreat; but he received some false intelligence from Mr. Frere, formerly our minister at Madrid, and he advanced instead, purposing to strike a blow, before Napoleon could come up, at Soult, who was on the banks of the Carion with 18,000 men.

But Soult had withdrawn, and Moore, afraid of being surrounded, commenced a hasty retreat, with Napoleon close at his heels. On January 1, 1809, the latter was at Astorga with 70,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 200 guns, and from this place he could perceive the British rear. But he was now called away by news from Austria, and left the pursuit to Soult. The weather was bad, the roads the same, and provisions scanty; and the British had often to face about and repulse the enemy.

At last, on January 13, Moore reached Corunna, but the transport-ships did not arrive until the following day. Soult had possession of the hills round the town, and it was necessary to fight a battle to cover the embarkation. This took place on the 16th. Moore had about 15,000 infantry, and Soult about 20,000—the ground not being suitable for cavalry. In defending the village of Elvina, which the enemy were attacking, Sir John Moore was struck in the chest by a cannon-ball, and mortally wounded. He was carried to Corunna in a blanket, stopping now and again to watch the progress of the battle. The French were repulsed, but Moore determined to hasten the embarkation.

He died that evening, and was buried on the ramparts "with his martial cloak around him." The embarkation, being covered by some line-of-battle ships, was completed safely by January 18.

Percy W. Sadler.



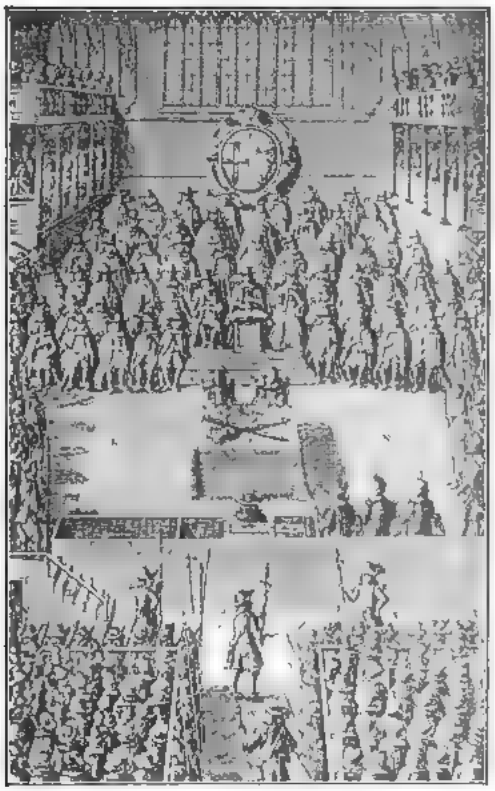
THE BATTLE OF CORUNNA.
From a painting.

**Trial and Execution of King Charles I.**

More than six years of civil war had passed, and twice the King had been decisively beaten. 1648 was drawing to its close when Parliament re-opened the negotiations with Charles which are known as the "Treaty of Newport." But Cromwell and the Council of Officers, though they had come to respect the *man*, hated the *king*, with his ideas of "Prerogative," and would hear of no further parleys. So they presented the Grand Army Remonstrance, demanding the dissolution of Parliament, and the punishment of "the capital and grand author" of all the troubles of the country. Parliament gave little heed to this Remonstrance, with the result that the army seized the king's person, and suspended one hundred and fifty-three Presbyterian Members of Parliament; this last operation being known as "Pride's Purge."

The remaining members (nicknamed "the Rump," for they were the sitting part of Parliament) voted for the trial of the king, and on January 20, 1649, Charles was arraigned before a specially constituted High Court of Justice as a "tyrant, murderer, public and implacable enemy of the Commonwealth of England."

What verdict was to be expected from men absolutely under the thumb of the armed minority, which had then constituted itself the



TRIAL OF CHARLES I. IN WESTMINSTER HALL, 1649.

From an old print.
Photo. Rischgitz.

governing body of the realm? After a sitting of seven days, the king was sentenced to death, only half his judges being present.

On the 30th of the same month (for the "justice" of the Rump was summary in its dealings) Charles I. was led out to die in front of his own palace at Whitehall. None but soldiers could approach the scaffold, and the speech which the king had evidently prepared for the people was delivered only to Juxon and Tomlinson, who accompanied him to the block. Constant to the last in his support of "Prerogative," the address of Charles was to prove that he was in the right, and that subjects ought to have no part whatever in government. His last words before the fatal blow were: "I have on my side a just cause, and a merciful God."

As he had faced man, so he faced death; in manly and dignified fashion, and without fear. Even his political opponents were moved to admiration, and one Andrew Marvell, Member of Parliament for Hull, wrote thus of his execution:

"He nothing common did nor mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try;
Nor called the gods, with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bow'd his comely head
Down, as upon a bed."

BENJAMIN CORBYN.

**The Death of General Gordon.**

OCCURRING as it did in the early stages of the New Year, the capitulation last year of Port Arthur possesses a peculiar interest for us when we remember that it is just twenty years since the British public were following with an even keener and more anxious interest the events of another siege, similar—as all sieges are—in suffering and hardship, but more intensely tragic in its *dénouement*. Gordon, the gallant defender of Khartoum, was not spared to receive the plaudits of his fellow men, but fell a victim to the fanatical hordes of the Mahdi.

The greatest epoch of a great career dawned when Gordon entered the service of the Khedive of Egypt, and was appointed Governor of the Soudan. Here the task of making order was herculean, but the resolute nature of the man carried him through, and on resigning his post in 1880 he had won the love of friend and the respect of foe.

In 1882, affairs in Egypt again became critical. The religious revolt of the Mahdi assumed alarming dimensions, and threw the Egyptian Government into a state of panic. One man, and one only, could quell the rising. That man was Gordon. On his arrival, he was again appointed Governor of the Soudan, setting out immediately for Khartoum. "I come without soldiers to redress the wrongs of the Soudan," was his brief and characteristic proclamation on entering the city that was in the end to prove his death-trap.

THE STATUE OF GENERAL GORDON NOW IN KHARTOUM.

Unfortunately, Gordon and the British Government could not agree as to the best means of withdrawing the garrisons, and matters were protracted until the Mahdi and his followers, marching north, laid siege to Khartoum. For 317 days Gordon maintained the defence, daily expecting the relief force which was advancing up the Nile. His efforts were ineffectual, and on January 26, 1885, the town fell. Gordon was killed, dying, as he would have wished, at the post of duty.

WALTER L. DUALEY.

## The Fall of Port Arthur.

*[An Essay written shortly after the event.]*

THE last act of the great tragedy which held the eyes of all the world has been played, and the curtain has been rung down before the audience of nations. Whatever the interest of those who looked, morning after morning, for news from Port Arthur, they now stand in silent sympathy before a display of heroism and endurance that has few equals in all the grim legends of battle. In such a siege there is none of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

A SCENE AT THE FALL OF PORT ARTHUR.

From the painting by a Japanese artist.

For General Stoessel every Briton who loves a gallant gentleman, whether he be friend or foe, must feel a respectful pity. When we remember the thousands of sick, the wrecked hospitals, the lack of antiseptics and anæsthetics—those merciful discoveries that have abolished the more indescribable horrors of the battlefield—the shortness of the food-supply, the ever-falling shells loaded with the most powerful explosives, the dreaded night attacks that racked the nerves without intermission—when we remember these things, the words of the *Novy Krai* cannot be held to have been exaggerated. "It is past the power of human genius to describe Port Arthur's sufferings as they really are," said that garrison newspaper. Yet through these scenes passed General Stoessel, cheering the faint-hearted, sparing himself not at all, ever keeping a face of courage to the foe. In the streets of Tokyo as in those of London, the marvellous heroism of the Russian General is fully recognised and generously applauded.

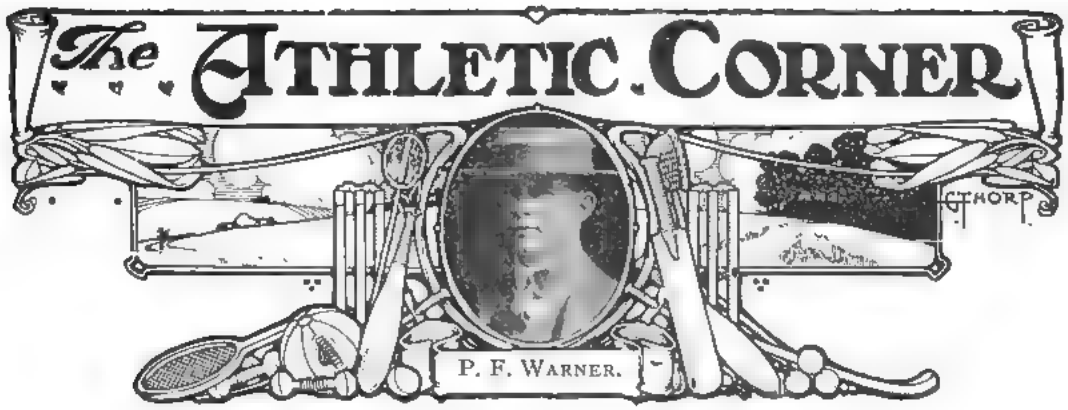
Of Nogi and his men, what can be said? They met science with the boldest ingenuity; they made the impregnable defenceless by a superhuman courage; they showed themselves without peers among the trained and disciplined armies of the world. We, their allies, salute them.

T. OLIVER.

## "THE CAPTAIN" CALENDAR, JANUARY 1906.

| | | | Cycle Lamps to be Lighted. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mon. | New Year's Day. | 5.0. |
| 2. | Tues. | W. M. Bradley, cricketer, *b.* 1875. | 5.1. |
| 3. | Wed. | George Manville Fenn, *b.* 1831. | 5.3. |
| 4. | Thurs. | The Rev. W. T. A. Barber, D.D., Headmaster of Leys School, Cambridge, *b.* 1858. | 5.4. |
| 5. | Fri. | Edward the Confessor, *d.* 1066. | 5.5. |
| 6. | Sat. | The Rev. A. W. Upcott, Headmaster of Christ's Hospital, *b.* 1857. | 5.6. |
| 7. | Sun. | First after Epiphany. | 5.7. |
| 8. | Mon. | Lord Dulmeny, cricketer, *b.* 1882. | 5.8. |
| 9. | Tues. | C. J. Kortright, cricketer, *b.* 1871. | 5.9. |
| 10. | Wed. | Metropolitan Railway opened, 1863. | 5.11. |
| 11. | Thurs. | H. and W. Baddeley, tennis champions, *b.* 1872. | 5.12. |
| 12. | Fri. | H. H. Hilton, golf champion, *b.* 1869 | 5.13. |
| 13. | Sat. | Prince Arthur of Connaught, *b.* 1883. | 5.15 |
| 14. | Sun. | Second after Epiphany. | 5.16. |
| 15. | Mon. | Princess Gustavus of Sweden, *b.* 1882. | 5.18. |
| 16. | Tues. | A. L. Francis, Headmaster of Blundell's School, *b.* 1848. | 5.19. |
| 17. | Wed. | F. H. B. Champain, cricketer, *b.* 1877. | 5.21. |
| 18. | Thurs. | Right Hon. Sir Edmund Barton, *b.* 1849. | 5.23. |
| 19. | Fri. | James Watt, engineer, *b.* 1736. | 5.25. |
| 20. | Sat. | J. Ruskin, *d.* 1900. | 5.26. |
| 21. | Sun. | Third after Epiphany. | 5.28. |
| 22. | Mon. | February CAPTAIN published. | 5.30. |
| 23. | Tues. | William Pitt, *d.* 1806. | 5.31. |
| 24. | Wed. | Charles James Fox, *b.* 1749. | 5.33. |
| 25. | Thurs. | W. Storer, cricketer, *b.* 1868. | 5.34. |
| 26. | Fri. | Bishop of London, *b.* 1858. | 5.35. |
| 27. | Sat. | German Emperor, *b.* 1859. | 5.38. |
| 28. | Sun. | Fourth after Epiphany. | 5.41. |
| 29. | Mon. | The Victoria Cross instituted, 1856. | 5.41. |
| 30. | Tues. | V. T. Hill, cricketer, *b.* 1871. | 5.43. |
| 31. | Wed. | Guy Fawkes executed, 1606. | 5.45. |

# The Athletic Corner

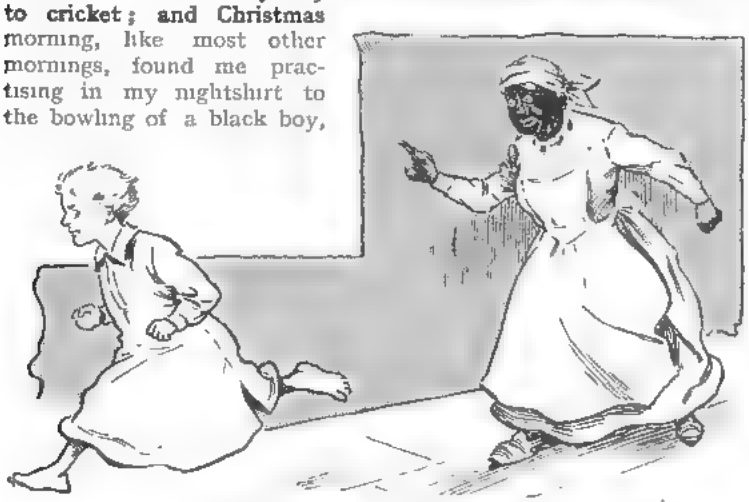



## SOME CHRISTMASES I HAVE SPENT.

CHRISTMAS is really the same all the world over, for though the climate may differ, and instead of English snow, or London fog and mud, we may have sunshine and warmth, and plum puddings —for the plum pudding is traditional Christmas fare—followed by strawberries and cream, it is just the same merry season of good cheer and happiness, be it spent in London or Buluwayo, Switzerland or the West Indies.

Trinidad is the largest after Jamaica of the British West Indian Islands, and the hottest. It was once, it is supposed, a part of South America. We took it from the Spaniards in 1797, and since then it has remained English. It is the most flourishing of all the islands and destined to do even better in the future. Here I spent my first and many subsequent Christmases.

Even in those early days I was devoted to cricket; and Christmas morning, like most other mornings, found me practising in my nightshirt to the bowling of a black boy, who did all sorts of odd jobs about the house, on a marble paved gallery which provided a fast and very true wicket. Close in upon the on side were the glass windows of a room, and even now I am ashamed to recall the number of panes shattered by my on drive! Many were the times that my black bowler and I took to our heels followed by an angry nurse, who prophesied that I should come to a bad end. But years afterwards when I went back to the West Indies my "nanny" had so far forgiven me as to embrace me publicly on the steps of the hotel, and to shower all sorts of devoted blessings on my head.



FOLLOWED BY AN ANGRY NURSE.

The black people in Trinidad always dress themselves up in the height of fashion for church on Christmas Day, and the bright headdress of the women is really strikingly pretty. Feet, unaccustomed to any covering, are for the occasion encased in a brand new pair of boots, and I have heard the following whispered conversation in Church between mother and son: *Son:* "Me boots hurt me." *Mother:* "Take 'em off den." And presently Nathaniel would be observed taking off his boots: to put them hurriedly on again, however, at the end of the service.

One Christmas I spent on a voyage to Guiria on the Venezuelan coast in a schooner, the *Letitia Thorborn*. Our party consisted of ten, additional to the company being Joshua Jones, the Commodore's boy; Boobool, steward; San Domingo,

the cook ; Captain Taylor, a Yankee mate, and two seamen. After setting sail, the provisions were stored and handed over to the care of Boobool, who frustrated during the night an attempt at theft on the part of one of the seamen.

The *Letitia Thorborn* was not dignified by anything in the way of a cabin—indeed, in such a hot climate a cabin is scarcely wanted—and we slept on deck or in hammocks. On approaching Guiria we saluted the port. The Venezuelans evidently thought that a revolutionary party had arrived, but, recovering from their first fright, Custom House officers came on board, and confidence having been restored

THE PILOT WAS ably DEFENDED BY MY BROTHER.

by means of generous hospitality, they gave us "pratique."

Later, General Penalosa paid us an official visit and invited us to dine with him. On the return home the pilot took us up a wrong creek, and was therefore brought up before a drum head court martial. Ably defended by my brother, who pleaded *non compos mentis*, he was eventually pardoned, but his terror was almost pitiable to behold. To him the matter was a very serious one, and no joke.

Venezuela at one time suffered greatly from locusts, and Trinidad being but thirty-five miles from Venezuela, the government of the island were very much on the *qui vive*. On one occasion during the Christmas holidays, an expedition was organised to destroy the locusts. The latter were located on the grounds of a cocoa estate near the sea shore. Large numbers of locusts had laid their eggs in exposed positions, and as soon as these had been hatched by the heat of the sun, the young crops began to suffer destruction. A locust lays an egg containing seventy-two smaller eggs, so it can be imagined how difficult the pests are to exterminate when once they have obtained a hold.

Hundreds of cases of petroleum were brought, together with yards of hose and several garden pumps, and the maize and other green crops, which were covered with young locusts, were then set on fire. The black men of the party could not be trusted to play the hoses of petroleum, for their excitement was so great that there was a danger of their falling into the fire. The white men, therefore, had to do the spraying of the petroleum—cruel work under a tropical sun with the heat of the flames in one's face.

This was the first day's work. Next morning an enormous number of locusts were found lying on the ruins of the works of an old sugar estate. Two rings were formed, an outer and an inner, each of which was made of dried grass and leaves and saturated with petroleum. The trees growing in and about the walls of the old boiler house were then sprayed with oil. One hundred and twenty cases containing ten gallons each were used ; so the "spraying" was pretty thorough. The whole thing was then set on fire, and millions of locusts perished in the flames. The smell of the burnt locusts for many days afterwards was most objectionable.

One thing only now remained to be done and that was to fork the ground where the locusts had lain. Temper lime was then sprinkled over the ground, which was afterwards soaked with salt water. The result was that the eggs of the insects were all boiled, for when water is thrown upon temper lime a tremendous heat is caused. Thus ended the famous locust hunt, an expedition which is still talked of in Trinidad.

The Christmas of 1898 I spent at Cape Town, where I was playing cricket with Lord Hawke. We all went to the cathedral, and I remember the Archbishop afterwards telling Lord Hawke that our coming to church in a body had done more good than any number of sermons. It was the fashion then, we were told, among the youth of Cape Town to shirk going to church, but when they heard that we had gone both on Christmas Day and New Year's Day it occurred to them that after all it might be the right thing to do likewise.

It was very hot at Christmas time that season at the Cape. But one day the wind shifted to the south-east, the temperature dropped considerably, and a terrific dust storm came on. Every window and chink in the

hotel was barred up, but the dust came through and everything was soon covered with it. The force of the wind was so great that the driver of a cab, a Malay, had his fez blown right over the parade ground, over the railway station, and into the sea.

We had arrived at Cape Town by the *Scot* on December 20, and on Christmas Eve began the first match of the tour against XIII of the Western Province. This we eventually won, after a most exciting finish, by twenty-five runs. Lord Hawke's XI made 141 and 140, our opponents 149 and 107. Haigh bowled magnificently at a critical moment in the second innings, and took five wickets for fourteen runs. On Boxing Day there was a crowd of between seven and eight thousand people, and the smart dresses of the ladies gave the affair the look of an Eton *v.* Harrow match at Lord's. South African hospitality is proverbial all the world over, and though servants at the Cape regard Christmas as their own special time for holiday-making, we did not suffer on that account.

A day or two before the Christmas of 1902, I left Auckland (New Zealand), where I was playing cricket with Lord Hawke's team, for Rotorua, in the Hot Lakes District. A railway journey of between six and seven hours brought us to Rotorua. As we drew near to the station the country round appeared to be on fire. Columns of steam were rising from the boiling springs, and there was a strong smell of sulphur. On the morning after our arrival we started off in a brake. After driving through a forest, we came to Lake Tikitapu, which is said to contain only one living thing and that a dragon. Some years back three Maoris disappeared mysteriously, and the people of the countryside firmly believe that they ventured too near Tikitapu after dark, and were eaten by the dragon.

Driving on, our guide Warbeck, who was one of five brothers who visited England with the Maori football team in the winter of 1888–89, stopped on the way to show us the spot where, at the time of the volcanic disturbances which destroyed in June 1886 the famous Pink and White Terraces, an old man was buried for five days. At the end of that time he was found alive, it seems only to die, however, three weeks after from over-eating. Later we came to Rotomahana, the boiling lake. For the first few minutes as we walked along the margin the water appeared quite cold, but it gradually became warmer as we neared the far corner of the lake, until it boiled and bubbled and hissed, and great clouds of steam arose on all sides. The curious thing is that the water boils only in one corner, the rest of the lake being quite cold. Leaving this Inferno we made our way to a cooler landing-stage, and then up a steep mountain to the Waimangu (Black Water) Geyser, where subsequently our guide lost his life. From our standpoint we gazed down into a huge boiling pool, the water all in a ferment and traversed by what looked like dark streams of oil.

AT WHAKAREWAREWA WE SAW THE GEYSER SOAPED.

On Christmas Day itself we were shown over the Sanatorium at Rotorua. Hundreds of people come here every year, for the hot springs possess undoubted healing virtues, and the New Zealand Government are full of hope that Rotorua and the district round may yet become the Baden of the South Seas. At Whakarewarewa we saw the geyser soaped. It is a well-known fact that two or three bars of ordinary washing soap will make any moderate-sized geyser go off. On another day we went across Lake Rotorua to Hamurana, where we were shown a wonderful spring of the clearest colour. The water forces its way up so fast that pennies, threepenny pieces, and even shillings float about just below the surface. We saw, too, Tikiteri, with its "Inferno" and "Devil's Punch Bowl" and "Satan's Glory," great pools of boiling mud, groaning and heaving as if thousands of imprisoned demons were shrieking to be let loose, a place so appalling that a Scotchman is said to have exclaimed on seeing it, "By —, I shall never swear again!"

Whence came the Maoris? The latest

THEY CAME UP BATHED IN PERSPIRATION.

theory is that several thousand years ago the Maori race dwelt on the plains and foot-hills of the Himalayas, with their borders on the Persian gulf. After the Aryan invasion they migrated to New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides and Fiji, subsequently passing to Samoa, Tahiti, and Raratonga. From some of these islands came the ancestors of the New Zealand Maoris. The notched sticks kept by the Tohungas indicate that from twenty to thirty generations have passed since their Columbus showed the way to New Zealand; but the whole matter is one of conjecture. The Maori is no longer what he was, and though at one time there was every reason to fear that the race was dying out, there has been a new movement among them under the fostering care of the New Zealand Government. They are great orators and have a deep love for poetry, while their voices are delightfully soft and fascinating. Maggie, the guide who showed us over Whakarewarewa, was a very charming lady with the manners of the *ancien régime* and a great fluency of expression.

Of all the Christmases I have spent, this one, so brimful of new impressions and ideas, I am the least likely to forget.

The Christmas of 1903 I spent partly in Melbourne, partly in the train, and partly in Bendigo. We were feeling very pleased with ourselves, as we had but recently won the first Test Match. There was a merry Christmas dinner in the middle of the day at the Menzies Hotel, and every member of the M.C.C. team was present, of course. At this time of year Melbourne, generally cool and pleasant, becomes oppressive, and on Christmas Day the thermometer registered 100° in the shade. The railway journey to Bendigo, a hundred miles away, where we were to play cricket next day, took us four hours and a half, and the match itself was one of the least interesting of the tour. We had all heard of the New Rush, as Bendigo was called fifty years ago, and several of us went down the chief gold-mine of the district, the Great Northern I had had a previous experience of the inside of a South African mine, so I stayed in bed, well remembering that a knowledge of gold-mining is more pleasantly, if not more thoroughly, obtained above ground than in the bowels of the wet and dripping earth. The inexperienced members of our party, after lying flat on their backs, clothed in rags in a dirty truck, came up an hour or two later bathed in perspiration and thoroughly tired out, having seen nothing more than a drill at work. Perchance a few may have been fired with the hope, as Board was in Johannesburg, of picking

FOR HOURS THE RAIN POURED DOWN IN TORRENTS.

(This is our Tame Artist's idea of the Bendigo match. As a matter of fact, Mr. Warner and his merrie men did not budge from the pavilion till the rain stopped.—O.F.)

up a valuable nugget or two off the sides of the walls!

The match against the local XVIII was remarkable only for a tremendous thunderstorm. For hours the rain poured down in torrents, and the streets soon became roaring streams. Drought is the worst enemy of Australians, but when I was there we had plenty of rain, which was very welcome, as it came after a prolonged drought. In some parts of Northern Queensland children seven years old had never seen rain It was laughingly said of me that I brought rain in my train—indeed, I was called Rainy Jim, and one well-known Melbourne man remarked that it would be worth Australia's while to pay me a million or two to come out every year. I said that I should not mind doing so provided I could bring Rhodes with me!

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**L. Muir-Smith.**—Many thanks for the postal order for one shilling for the Lilley Testimonial Fund. I have sent it to the Secretary of the Fund.

**Timepiece.**—Tarrant did not play for Middlesex during the whole of last season, as he was not qualified to do so until June 10. His first appearance for Middlesex was against Somerset in the Whit Monday match at Lord's, when he made between 30 and 40 runs, and took several wickets. As regards the question which arose at lawn tennis, I should say that the point counts to the striker. If a player is successful enough to put such an abnormal spin on the ball that when it bounces in his opponent's court it bounds back over the net, I think he ought to be allowed every credit for such a phenomenal stroke, but I cannot imagine that its occurrence would be anything but extremely rare. It is difficult to lay down any hard and fast rules as to the management of a boys' cricket club unless one is acquainted with the circumstances and surroundings attaching to such a club, but the arrangements for matches are easy enough; you have only to follow the rules of cricket. As regards practice, I should suggest that no boy be allowed to bat or bowl for more than twenty minutes at a time. And do not forget to practise fielding. It is a branch of the game too often neglected, though when practised systematically and conscientiously is just as much fun as batting or bowling.

**Kricket-Spaler.**—Yes; Vogler, who is an excellent all-round cricketer, is qualifying for Middlesex, and will be able to play in May 1907. His engagement at Port Elizabeth will not affect his qualification, as I understand he is only in South Africa for three or four months during the present winter, and that he has taken up his domicile in England. No; J. H. Sinclair did not play in the Gentlemen *v.* Players' match in 1901. He played for England *v.* Yorkshire at Lord's in September of that year. So far as I remember, he made only 1, being clean bowled by George Hirst, but he took three wickets for about 90 runs. You will have noticed that in my article last month I criticised the form of several members of the South African team which came to England in 1904.

**Xodus.**—The answer to your question was given in the February number of THE CAPTAIN.

**Jack.**—"The History of Yorkshire Cricket," and "The Cricket of Abel, Hirst, and Shrewsbury," give, in my opinion, the best accounts of the life and cricket performances of George Hirst.

**G. C. Learmond.**—Thank you very much indeed for sending me a copy of the newspaper. Glad to see Trinidad is doing so well. I hope cricket will continue to flourish in the West Indies. I hear from the members of Lord Brackley's team that it has improved enormously of recent years. Perhaps another West Indian team will invade us soon.

**M. Edwards.**—Your friend is quite wrong when he says that it is impossible to be out l.b.w. to a left-arm, round the wicket bowler. I have been given out l.b.w. scores of times in such cases, and, what is more, have been most fairly out. Of course, it is almost impossible to be leg-before to a left-arm, round the wicket bowler when the ball comes across with the bowler's arm, as such a ball, if it pitches on the middle and leg stumps, is practically certain to miss the wicket. Still, it is just possible to be out to a ball of this description if it pitches on the off stump, for in that case it is conceivable that the ball might hit the leg stump. But as a general rule it is almost impossible to be out l.b.w. when the ball comes with the arm. On the other hand, some of the clearest cases of leg before to a left-hand bowler are when the ball pitches on the middle and leg stumps, and breaks back. People are very apt to think that they are never out l.b.w. With an increase of one's knowledge of cricket there is a disposition to draw diagrams, &c., telling the flight of a ball. L.b.w. is a very unsatisfactory way of getting out. Eight times out of ten the decision is absolutely correct, but it cannot always be so, as any one who plays cricket must recollect that there are occasions when the ball pitches in the block-hole and yet for some unaccountable reason misses the wicket. This may be said to be one of the exceptions which proves the rule. The idea that you cannot be out to a left-hand bowler round the wicket is just as much a fallacy as the old theory that one cannot be out l.b.w. to a right handed bowler round the wicket.

**J. A. Jesse.**—I regret I was not able to answer your letter personally, as I was away from London at the time. Also, as a general rule I never reply to correspondence except through the columns of this magazine. When a no-ball is not scored off, a run is added to the extras, but not placed against the bowler's analysis. When a no-ball is scored off, the runs are credited to the batsman. The no-ball is not counted as well, nor is it included in the over. Thus, if a batsman hits the sixth and last ball of an over for 4, the umpire having called "No-ball," the striker gets his four runs, the no-ball is not included in the extras, and another ball is necessary to complete the over. The rules of cricket are open to a clearer rendering, and I understand that some revision of them making clearer certain difficult points is proposed.

**South Africa.**—The first English team to visit South Africa was Major Wharton's in the winter of 1888–89. In those days the railway had not reached Johannesburg. The second team was W. W. Read's in 1891–92; the third Lord Hawke's, 1895–96; the fourth also Lord Hawke's, 1898–99. The present M.C.C. combination is therefore the fifth. J. H. Sinclair is, I fancy, the best all-round cricketer in South Africa at the present time.

# THE FUGITIVE.

BY TREVACE REAY.

## I.

"MY FAITH! this is a smoked shame," declared Ensign Aigburth, as he gloomily beheld his beloved colours rapidly lose their brilliant hue under a greyish-white powder that drifted densely from the scorched roadway.

"You can shake the colours free after they've passed," placidly returned his companion, Captain Lornan, a veteran who had lately been gazetted adjutant to the newly arrived regiment of Hussars.

"All very well, but can you shake the men?" retorted the lad indignantly. "Look down the lines—it makes a man's heart grieve. One would think this was a regiment of mounted millers! And look at those jackanapes of Dragoons—delighted at our discomforture, simply because we're spick and span, and they're ragged as pedlars. George! I'd like to turn our lads loose on 'em."

"Keep cool, Bantling," laughed the other, "a little dust's neither here nor there. And I wouldn't advise you to tackle our neighbours. They're accustomed to face other clouds than those of dust—some of lead, and some of steel." Captain Lornan's eyes glinted as he thought of the glorious victories still fresh in his experience, and the hopes of greater still to come.

For the first stage of Lord Wellington's great march from the Agueda to the Pyrenees had been completed. The centre, under his personal command, had reached the banks of

the Douro, between the towns of Toro and Zamora, and was drawn up for review, under the blazing rays of the Spanish sun, one day late in May 1813, prior to its junction with the left and right wings. Thence it was to continue an irresistible advance which was to sweep the French invaders through the mountains, as a broom sweeps rain-puddles from the pavement.

But the fiery little ensign was not consoled. His caustic criticisms of Pack's Portuguese division, as it swung bravely down the sloping road from Salamanca, would have drawn many a knife from its sheath had they reached the ears of those hot-blooded soldadoes.

Now the cause of Ensign Aigburth's discontent was that the arriving reinforcements disturbed more of the surface of the road than seemed consistent with good marching, to his mind, and his regiment, being on the extreme flank, touching the road, received the discomfort in full. This was the more trying to them, as, having only served since the winter previous, and never in the field, their handsome uniforms were still natty with newness, and would have gained them the credit of the smartest set on parade, but for the coming of the Portuguese.

Ensign Aigburth, being both small and pugnacious, well merited his pet-name of "Bantling." In the few short months he had served with the field force, his swordsmanship had become famous, for he never lost an opportunity to cross blades with exponents of the art. And though fencing was sore neglected in the British army of that period, it did not detract from the lad's achievements that he should not, up to this moment, have met his master. There was a tragic significance in this same proficiency. To his colleagues the reason was well-known—a story that in those times was not unique. He had had a father who, though admirable in his family circle, had been quarrelsome in his cups, a state he was fonder of than wisdom allowed. Not even the participants had been able to say how the fatal quarrel arose, but its outcome was a fight with swords under the trees of Hyde Park, and its effect a home left fatherless. The miscreant who made such misfortune, one Richard Montspiel, had fled the country. He had gone to Spain, report said: for the truth of which his victim's son hoped earnestly, training his sword arm against the reckoning which, he felt, could not be far distant when his regiment received orders for the Peninsula.

The stolid-natured Lornan watched his spirited companion grow angrier and angrier. He would have attempted cool counsel again, but to his surprise, he saw the lad's face blanch whiter than his pipe-clayed belting, and his staring eyes focus upon a picturesque figure, clad in flowing cloak, who rode on the flank of the approaching Portuguese. When directly opposite them the man turned a frank, handsome countenance their way. "He's no Portugalete," Lornan at once remarked, but his words were overborne by an outburst from Aigburth: "Heavens! Lornan, see that man? Look—Dick Montspiel, I'll swear on oath! Let me face the reptile!"

"Hold, sir! keep your place in the ranks;" and the Captain laid a firm hand on the ensign's bridle, as the charger was answering the spur. "Stay, you young fool! Here comes the commander-in-chief! Your affair can wait. "Sirs, whose soldiers are ye?" he called in Portuguese to the passing ranks.

"Cardona's Carabineers," came back the sonorous response.

"There," said Lornan, "seek him among them to-night. Brace up now. Steady!"

## II.

The officers of Cardona's Carabineers, among them hidalgoes from the oldest families of Portugal, counted it good fortune that, on joining the British camp, they could seize an aged, half-ruined barn to serve as mess. At night, within its gloomy confines, the guitar tinkled, ballads lilted, and the smoke-wreaths of innumerable cigarren rambled among the rafters. At the farther end a log-fire had been built; around it were gathered the gentler spirits, the quietest of whom was Don Ingles, a veteran volunteer, renowned and respected among them. He sat sad and silent, holding a battered, blunted cavalry sabre with which he stirred the crackling logs from time to time.

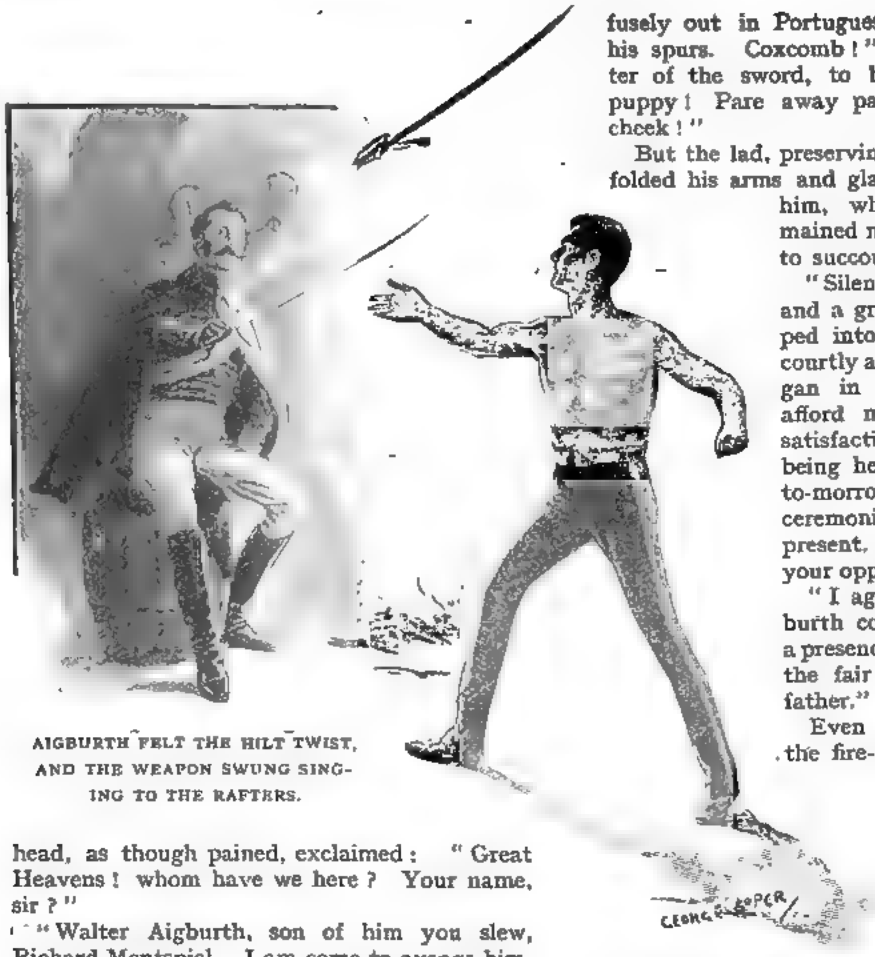
"My very good friend is cheerless to-night," remarked a neighbour kindly.

"Yes, your honour, my heart is moved by the vision of a face that looked out at me from the ranks of my countrymen to-day, and seemed like one——"

Then, abrupt, peremptory blows on the barn door stayed his story. A subordinate officer answered the summons, a moment later striding up the barn, followed by a brace of British Hussars.

"Don Ingles, sir; visitors for you."

He turned his fine-looking, bearded countenance towards them. The foremost Hussar stood well forward in the fire-light, facing him defiantly. Don Ingles gazed wonderingly upon him, and, passing his hand across his fore-



AIGBURTH FELT THE HILT TWIST, AND THE WEAPON SWUNG SINGING TO THE RAFTERS.

head, as though pained, exclaimed: "Great Heavens! whom have we here? Your name, sir?"

"Walter Aigburth, son of him you slew, Richard Montspiel. I am come to avenge him. You shall have the choice,—fight me, or be delivered up to justice."

Montspiel, who did not deny his identity, rapidly recovered his self-control, and smiled, but not unkindly. "Boy, you ask two impossibilities. I will not have the blood of another Aigburth laid to my charge, and in this country no tribunal would arraign me."

"I will seek the one at least," the lad declared hotly. "You still have some miserable semblance of honour, I suppose; then, before these your comrades, defend it." And, as he uttered the last words, Aigburth flung his leathern glove into the other's face.

Immediately, like a cannon's report following the flame, a threatening murmur rumbled through the room, for their English comrade was popular with the Carabineers, who also prided themselves upon a precise observance of honour. All crowded to the corner around the disputants. Advice poured profusely out in Portuguese. "Ingles, shear his spurs. Coxcomb!" "You, sir, a master of the sword, to be confronted by a puppy! Pare away part of his beardless cheek!"

But the lad, preserving a confident mien, folded his arms and glanced proudly about him, while his friend remained near his elbow, ready to succour or support.

"Silencio!" roared a voice, and a grizzled veteran stepped into their midst with a courtly air. "Señor," he began in English, "you will afford my honoured friend satisfaction? We soldiers, being here to-day and gone to-morrow, must hurry our ceremonies. Your second is present. I will do service for your opponent."

"I agree," answered Aigburth coldly. "In so large a presence I shall surely have the fair play he denied my father."

Even in the red glare of the fire-light they could see Montspiel's ruddy countenance assume a deeper hue. He made a gesture of disapproval, and, at the same time, beckoned the Portuguese officer to his side. A low, hurried conversation passed between them; then the Portuguese returned to the Englishman who accompanied Aigburth, and, drawing him aside, said seriously: "Señor, my principal is loth to cross blade with yours. Is there, then, no honourable means of settling this affair, an apology or explanation?"

"Sir," replied Aigburth's companion, "no apology, no explanation, could mend the harm that man has done my friend. Nor would I dare suggest it. Ensign Aigburth has a will stiff and unbending as this scabbard."

"So be it," remarked the Portuguese, bowing profoundly; "and your friend, can he know whom he challenges? Does he manage well the sword?"

"None better in the whole division, sir."

"Though one at least outside it," retorted the other, smiling grimly.

This delay fretted Aigburth, who, stripped to

his shirt, was standing ready with bared blade. So to Montspiel he said sharply: "Sir, my patience has a limit; come, take your guard."

Montspiel never stirred from his seat on an empty wine butt; his cloak was still around his shoulders, his hand grasping the heavy, edgeless sabre. "I will not come," he quietly replied; "this quarrel is not of my seeking. Not a step will I come to find it."

Aigburth stood perplexed; then, observing that the Portuguese were openly smiling at his dilemma, he flushed, and advanced with the cry: "Take a weapon in defence before I spit you like the reptile you are."

"I am sufficiently armed," replied Montspiel, swaying the sabre lightly.

In a moment he was vigorously attacked. Aigburth's fame as a fencer had not been cheaply won, but no sooner had his keen, sinuous sword kissed the other unbending blade, than he knew he was trying his strength with a master. Montspiel had a wrist strong and flexible as springs of steel; his eyes were set upon the lad's, reading there the intention of every stroke and feint.

Smiling, at intervals, he interrupted the sibilant kisses of the weapons. "Fault, boy." "Tut, poor stroke." "No, no, it should have been the point," all the while by a mere flick of the wrist meeting the fiercest onslaughts with consummate ease. "Oh, shocking," he cried at length. Aigburth felt the hilt twist in his hand, and his wrist cricked painfully. Then his hold broke, the weapon swung singing to the rafters, to fall clattering to the floor.

"Wipe the moisture from your palm, boy. Try again; discard that ugly lunge—it uncovers your whole body." And still Montspiel sat calmly upon the wine butt, as though it were only a fencing-lesson he were giving the lad.

Some one from among the semicircle of spectators handed Aigburth his weapon, and rather ashamedly he recommenced, scarce to touch the other blade, it seemed, when his own was despatched again upon an undignified flight.

"Tut, tut, boy, are you tired?" Not a note of scorn was in Montspiel's voice; with reproach rather he spoke.

Again they restored the blade to the younger swordsman. His face was now drawn, grave and pale, his pride refusing to own what every witness knew as well as himself, that victory could not by any possible chance be his. They maintained a wondering silence around the pair who fought—fought a strange fight in which one combatant, in spite of shifting, uncertain light from faggot and torch, could yet remain seated, and with careless confidence meet the determined effort of the opponent who sought nothing short of his life, and with appalling generosity afforded him every assistance in his attempts.

For the third time Aigburth attacked, this time with every faculty, muscle, and sinew tense with the energy of despair. Not a whisper, not a sound could be heard save the whistling and singing of resilient steel. This last effort of Aigburth was his finest. Montspiel appeared to find his guard menaced. Rising from his seat he braced himself, seemingly summoning his whole strength to ward off the furious strokes which brought the fire from the stiff, solid weapon he wielded. Then, as if taking an advantage of a sudden lull in the attack, the great clumsy sabre circulated at surprising speed, catching the lighter blade in its transit. A snap, a twang as of music, and Aigburth had the shame of seeing his favourite sword snap off short by the hilt.

The silence was rudely destroyed; *vivas* rang through the building; congratulations compassed him, but Montspiel showed no sign of elation. Advancing to where his defeated opponent stood with shamed face and body trembling visibly from excitement and annoyance, he said calmly: "Boy, such is the fair play I offer my enemies. That your father fell by my hand I do not deny. His life or mine; twice I disarmed him, twice he renewed the fight. Alas! he was no cooler in the head than you, his son. He attacked wildly in the third bout, the grass was dewey and dangerous, his foot slipped, and the point I intended for his shoulder passed through his heart."

Then, with flashing eye and drawn frame, Montspiel continued: "The man who told you I took unfair advantage lied! If he were here I'd carve liar on his craven heart. But I do not ask you to accept my word. Seek, if ever you can, Major Traynor of the Line; he will tell the story straight."

Then, turning to Aigburth's comrade, and speaking sternly for the first time, he growled: "Take the lad back to his quarters."

## III.

The officers of Aigburth's regiment had been allotted to the little church of San Mateo. Strange sorts of service they conducted therein too; and, doubtless, the good Padre afterwards repeated many lengthy orisons to atone for the sacrilege of the heretics. However, that sin lay light on the consciences of the gallant Hussars, who remembered the little church only as the snuggest, driest shelter they ever

experienced in the whole of their campaign. Certainly, it must be said, they offered no insult to the sacred building greater than giving their careless, healthy natures free scope and utterance.

While Aigburth tramped his sorrowful retreat, his comrades formed groups in the nave debating his exploit, for the secret had been badly kept. Such was the boy's reputation as a swordsman that the sporting spirits asked in vain for wagers against his chances of success.

When, at last, the principal and his second appeared, loud shouts of welcome reverberated under the vaulted roof.

"Hurrah, Bantling! Cock o' the walk again?"

"Well, fire-eater, how did he take his toasting?"

The shouting stilled suddenly to silence when the lad came near enough for the swinging lanterns to light his dolorous countenance. "George! what now?" gasped one, unable to restrain his surprise. For answer Aigburth held up the bladeless hilt, and hung his head.

"Mr. Aigburth! Ensign Aigburth! Where is he? Oh! there. Follow me, sir; you're wanted urgently at headquarters."

It was the stentorian voice of their Colonel that thus dispelled the awkwardness of the incident. He beckoned his subordinate from the doorway, and then stalked into the night, the lad following him with doleful step, convinced that the evil news of his escapade had travelled to dreaded ears, and that he was to be paraded for reprimand, if not disgrace.

There was no waiting at the house where the Commander-in-Chief had his abode. The Colonel and the Ensign passed the sentry unchallenged; a staff officer met them at the entrance. "His Lordship is waiting," he explained, and immediately returned to announce them.

Aigburth's pulses raced as he crossed the threshold. At a table lit by candles sat an officer; another stood respectfully at his shoulder, scrutinising a large map spread out before them. At their entrance, the seated man lifted a stern, grave countenance, whose aggressive-shaped hook-nose, inflexible lips and chin, and fearless eyes, have since to English minds been synonomous with patriotic devotion to duty.

"Ah! this is the lad, then?" he remarked in deep sonorous tone. "Um! looks light enough in body; shouldn't wear any horse. How's he mounted?"

"On the fastest beast in the whole brigade, my lord."

"Fast! um! that's all very well, but I'm not asking for a racer. Can it stay?"

"To the death, my lord."

"May need to." Lord Wellington turned his eyes inquiringly toward his secretary, Colonel Derringer.

"Well enough favoured, my lord."

"But, Derringer, my opinion still holds; a serious task for such a stripling."

"My lord, youth and courage may succeed where prudence and experience would fail. He's admirably adapted to shake off the fastest patrol. The road is unmistakable. Whom else might we send? Our last native messengers cost us dear, my lord. No; I say give me British blood astride British blood, and they'll come through on top wherever you send 'em."

"You're a man of great faith, Derringer," smiled his superior, "and this recommendation is like to try it."

Lord Wellington then turned his attention to the young Ensign standing shyly before him.

"Well, my boy, the King and myself have a special duty for you to perform. Much depends upon your success—Colonel Derringer's judgment for one thing," he added with a dry smile at his secretary. "Step here a moment; take a long look at this map to fix it in your memory. See, this is the direction you are to take; you may use any of the several roads as discretion directs, but you must get through the Tras os Montes with these instructions for General Sir Thomas Graham, who is coming up the farther side with his division. You have been selected owing to your skill and lightness as a rider; let me see you act up to that reputation. Heed this—on no account allow yourself to be captured or these despatches to fall into the enemy's hands. Report to me on your return, that I may not forget your abilities—if successful. Now go; better start before the dawn breaks."

"You're the luckiest lad in Christendom," said his Colonel, pressing the Ensign's hand warmly as they strode toward the stable-lines with the precious missive nestling cosily in the lining of Aigburth's tunic.

## IV.

On the morning following the fight in the barn, Dick Montspiel, with the dust of night-travel still soiling his clothes, sat on horseback before the ruined Posada del Monte, once the highest inn of the Tras os Montes, scanning the prospect gradually unfolding as the newly risen sun gathered up the mist curtains like a diligent housewife her counterpanes.

"ON NO ACCOUNT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE CAPTURED, OR THESE DESPATCHES TO FALL INTO THE ENEMY'S HANDS."

Montspiel was in sad humour, and the war-stricken scenery deepened his depression. For in that territory both Spanish insurrectionary partidas and French punitive corps had been equally aggressive, and the land wore weals scored by the whip of subjection. In the valleys villages were silent and unpeopled; churches stood defiled and defaced; the mills sulked mutely motionless; and the roofless cottages were shunned by both man and beast. Though the sights were not new to the fugitive, they yet drew forth many a sigh.

But not for reflection had he posted himself in that position. There were scouring squadrons of French cavalry to fear, scouting skirmishers from the army of occupation stretched across the North of Spain, and he looked eagerly for brass-helmeted Dragoons, white-cloaked Hussars, or breast-plated Chasseurs. But none could he count in his careful scrutiny.

Suddenly, a swift-moving object crossing the sky-line of the adjacent ridge attracted his attention. He quickly located it—a scurrying black dot on the white beaten track, to be followed shortly by a succession of similar figures. Montspiel's sight was trained to distance. "French in chase," he soliloquised, "of what, I cannot——! But I can—a British Hussar! Going well, too; well mounted, and so are the Frenchies. Now I read them; light blue jackets—that's the 10th, a well-horsed regiment, and those fellows mounted on the fastest. He'll have to travel, but he's coming the right way. Two swords against eight reduces the odds fifty per cent."

Eagerly he watched the flying figures, each in an eddy of dust, come steadily nearer, and jubilantly marked the English horse increase a good lead yard by yard, until finally, fully a mile in front as it breasted the slope on whose summit he himself stood, the gallant beast's stride shortened, and Montspiel could see that it was limping badly. Still the rider urged it on, and then, as he came in sight of the man on the hill, the Hussar flashed a sabre in the sunlight showing that he was prepared to cut his way past.

Montspiel held up his hand peacefully. "Tend your charger's foot, sir. Quick! I'll stand by!" he shouted, immediately adding in alarm, "Great Heavens! boy, are not even these wilds to be my asylum against your audacity?"

"You—Montspiel!" was the equally astonished rejoinder.

The elder man calmed first. "This is no time for private quarrels, while a common danger threatens. Come inside the posada; may be they'll ride past."

THE NEAR CAVALRY-MAN MET HIS STROKE WITH EASE, BUT HIS CHARGER STUMBLED WHEN THE CHEST OF AIGBURTH'S MOUNT CAUGHT ITS SHOULDER.

Google

Under cover of the fire-scarred walls they examined the horse's hurt, and removed the mischief-making pebble that had lodged between shoe and hoof. "There's trouble here," said Montspiel as he felt about the fetlock; "I'm afraid the family tenacity has brought you to grief, though it is exactly what your father would have done—follow me to the death. I am fated, it seems, never to shake off the shadow of his death, even though a fugitive in a foreign land. I left the camp secretly last night in the vain hope that I might never see you again, but—well, see here, our friends coming up the hill offer a solution to the difficulty. Your little mare is bound to founder, so let us toss who takes the sound mount, and who becomes game or guest to the gentlemen in chase."

"You are mistaken, sir," Aigburth coldly responded. "I am not seeking you. I'll find you later when I'm free. I'm under orders now."

"A thousand pardons," returned Montspiel in a relieved tone. "Under orders? That is to say, carrying them, I suppose, to General Graham, eh? I've heard he's at the other side of the mountains."

There was no time for Aigburth to answer before Montspiel, who had been reconnoitring from the doorway, exclaimed: "Here they come! Our best plan is to let them pass; then, to try a sudden charge in their rear. Have your weapon free."

Amid a thundering of hoofs, a jangling of accoutrements, with horses snorting and sweating, the Frenchmen dashed up. The foremost would have plunged past, but the grizzled sergeant-in-charge bellowed curses and commands together. The troopers reined in.

"Now is our chance. Pick your man," and before the astonished lad could make a move to prevent him Montspiel had leaped on to the back of the lame horse and dashed out with a yell upon the astounded enemy. Aigburth followed, choosing to pass the leading file on their left. The near cavalry-man met his stroke with ease, but his charger stumbled when the chest of Aigburth's mount caught its shoulder and thrust it in the way of the fellow. The lad was like to have escaped them had not a third opponent come up from behind, and the momentary pause to parry that attack gave the offside man time to throw his beast broadside across the path. In that *mêlée* Aigburth would have fared ill had not Montspiel ridden to his side through the other five, and over two—smitten two, in fact. The Frenchman was helpless before the master swordsman; his feeble guard was slashed aside and a back upper cut sent him groaning from the saddle. "Forward!" Montspiel roared at Aigburth, at the same instant striking the horse the lad rode. To give the lad his due, he would have wheeled about to the succour of the other, but the specific instructions he had to get the despatches through at all costs deterred him. Sorrowing, he kept on his way, in his mind a picture burning luminously, which he had seen in a hasty glance back as the horse raced away—the man he had sworn to slay fighting single-handed against his foes.

* * * * *

In the moonlight of the succeeding evening a strong patrol rode their mounts mercilessly over the mountain roads from General Graham's camp in the direction of the Tras os Montes. Ensign Aigburth, seated on a fresh charger, led the way tirelessly, and the troopers behind him cursed his haste, for both they and their beasts had done a good day's march.

They had reached the base of the sloping track, and were passing a patch of ilex oaks, when the squadron leader called out suddenly, "Halt! whom have we here?" His keen eye had discovered figures seeking the shadow of the trees. At the sound of his voice, a cloaked man stepped into the roadway, leading a dead-lame horse. Aigburth had pulled up impatiently, but in an instant he was out of the saddle running forward with outstretched hands, and exclaiming, "It is he! it is he! and unharmed! Did you elude them?"

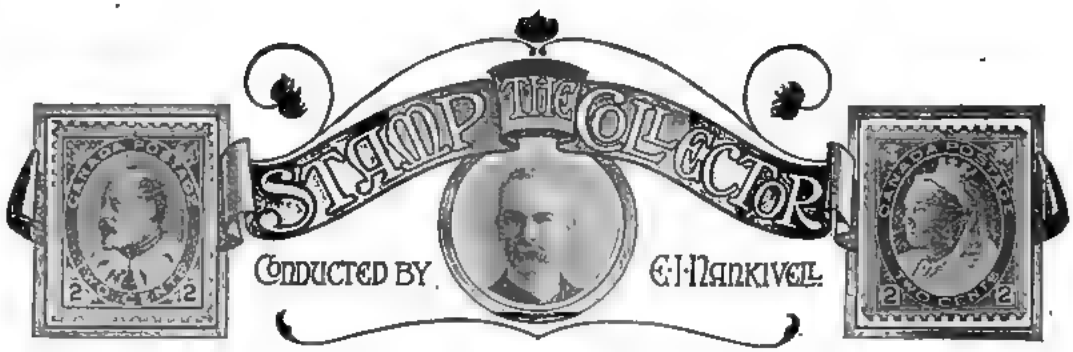
Montspiel, for so it was, answered laconically: "No; though two of them did me." Then from under his cloak he produced a bunch of red-stained busby brushes, "Sword four, pistol two—six; simpler than I thought."

"And you got me safely through! How can I thank you?"

Montspiel did not take the proffered grasp, but he answered the question straight away: "By returning me my horse and allowing me twelve hours start. You will meet Major Traynor, however; he is with Graham's force."

"I shall not seek him. It is unnecessary now, for I have the word of a man whom I have seen proven. And I must refuse part of your request. Come, let you and I forget the past. You were in part the cause of my mother suffering one loss, but wholly that of saving her another."

Montspiel caught his breath as he took the lad's hand in a fervent grasp. "Boy, God has at last given me the moment I dared not pray for. Am I at length to know the peace fugitives are denied?"




# THE STAMPS OF FINLAND.

"THE Land of Waters," as it is called, because of its numberless lakes and marshes, has, of late years, commanded much of the world's attention and sympathy. It has the great misfortune to be a Grand Duchy of the deplorable despotism known as the Russian Empire.

For 600 years it formed part of Sweden, then in 1721 Peter the Great sliced off a large portion. His successor, the Empress Elizabeth, made further encroachments, and, in 1809, the Emperor Alexander I. annexed the whole principality, assuring to the people, however, the comparative freedom of their ancient constitution. That promise was respected till 1899, when those rights were ruthlessly confiscated, and the so-called Russification of Finland reduced the people to a condition little better than that of serfdom. But now, in 1906, Finland is once more promised its freedom: all repressive laws passed since 1899 are to be abolished, and it is to have its own free parliament again.

MAP OF FINLAND.

The country is one vast tableland made up of lakes, marshes, and forests. The lakes are interlaced with canals. The forests cover no less than three-fifths of the land. One striking peculiarity of Finland is that the surface is said to be steadily rising. Scientific observers tell us that it has risen over three feet in a hundred years.

The country is very thinly populated, much more so than even European Russia, which can count 53 persons to the square mile, whilst Finland has only 20.

Its chief towns are Helsingfors, the capital, with a population of 97,000; Abo, 40,000; Tammerfors, 37,800; Viborg, 33,000; and Uleaborg, 17,000. The total population, which at the date of the annexation was under 1,000,000, rose to 1,636,915 in 1850, and to 2,744,952 in 1901.

## Its Philatelic History.

The postage stamps of Finland are quaint, pretty, and full of historic interest. Until the iron heel was applied in 1899, Finland had sole control of its postal arrangements, and its first issue antedates that of Russia by some two or three years.

The currency of the first issue was reckoned in Russian kopecs and roubles, but the design bore the arms of Finland. No question, however, was raised till 1875, when the Finland Government removed the Russian inscriptions

at the sides and inserted in their place the word "Finland" on the left and "Suomi," the Finnish name meaning the "land of the marshes," on the right. This was too much for the authorities at St. Petersburg, and by their orders the following issue of 1889 was inscribed with the name and value in Russian. In 1891 there was further Russian interference in the shape of an order that all letters addressed to Russia should be franked with Russian stamps, to the designs of which little circles were added in various places to mark their origin. In 1900 these distinctive markings were abandoned and an order issued that the ordinary stamps of Russia should be used. In the following year the Arms of Finland were removed from the designs in favour of the Arms of Russia on stamps required for correspondence within the Grand Duchy, but the value was expressed in Finnish as well as Russian.

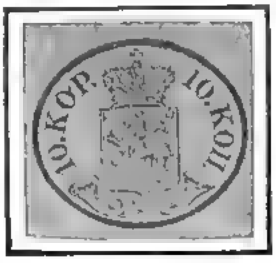
The early stamps are, in the matter of experiments in perforation, real philatelic curiosities, for the first perforation was done by zig-zag rouletting, which resulted in large and deep tooth-like edges all round each stamp. This inconvenient style of perforation was gradually modified till in 1875 the stamps were perforated by the ordinary perforation machines.

The language question has long been a sore point between the Finnish people and the Russian authorities, and this sore point finds expression in the changes made in the representation of the currency on the postage stamps. At first, as already mentioned, the values were expressed in Russian kopecs; then in the second issue, in 1866, this was altered to the Finnish pennia, abbreviated to "pen"; and finally there is the compromise in the series of 1867–70 of the values given in the Finnish, Russian, and Swedish languages.

**1856.**—Two values. Design, the arms of Finland enclosed in an oblong oval ring, with value on the left in Finnish characters, and on the right in Russian. The following official confidential circular, dated February 28, 1856, announcing the issue, was sent to the various postmasters, the secret marks referred to being introduced, it is said, in a panic of dread lest the stamps should be extensively forged.

"The Imperial senate having under the date of the 12th of the current month of February, given permission for what are termed 'franking stamps,' to be employed as an experiment, during this year and the next, upon correspondence sent by post, not only within Finland, but also addressed to Russia and abroad, and that these stamps of two kinds—*red*, of the value of 10 kopecs; and *blue*, of 5 kopecs—should be printed from the same die as that employed for the stamped envelopes previously issued, the Imperial Senate has decided:

"(1) 'That, partly as a means of identification, and partly also for the detection of any forgeries of the dies of the said stamps, they shall be provided with a secret mark, consisting in the insertion in the bell of each of the two post-horns placed beneath the arms, of a little point, engraved so that after the printing it remains uncoloured; this is notified confidentially to the postmasters.




"(2) 'That the stamps in question are to be issued to the public either singly or in complete boxes containing 100 copies.'"

The stamps were issued imperforate.

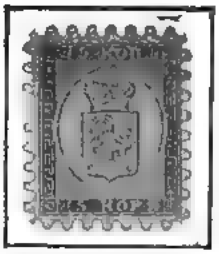
Imperforate.

| | Unused. s. d. | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|
| 5 kopecs, blue | — | 60 0 |
| 10 kopecs, red | 70 0 | 10 0 |

**1860.**—The experimental issue having satisfied the authorities of the desirability of continuing the use of postage stamps, the following official circular, dated January 5, 1857, was sent out:

"His Imperial Majesty having, under date of February 12 of last year, graciously ordained that the stamps called 'postage' or 'franking' should be employed, together with the stamped envelopes, during the above mentioned and the present year, for the transmission of correspondence by post, not only in the interior of Finland, but also to Russia and abroad, the Imperial Senate of Finland has thought fit, for the present, to permit the use of the postage or franking stamps in question should be continued until further orders, after the termination of the period decided upon as above, in the manner prescribed for the transmission of correspondence, which is notified by the present circular to the postmasters, in accordance with the memorandum lodged on May 12 last by the Honourable Secretarial of the Chancellery."

Accordingly, in the year of 1860 what was officially termed "a more convenient form of stamp" was introduced. The central portion of the design was made up, as before, of the arms of Finland, surmounted by the Imperial Crown, with inscription of value in labels at the top and bottom. The stamps were of the



then usual small rectangular shape, were printed on tinted paper, and were separated by a zigzag method of rouletting which left long tooth-like edges all round each stamp. There were two values, of 5 and 10 kopecs, as before.

Rouletted.

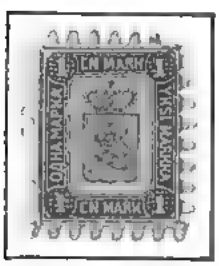
| | Unused. s. d. | | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 kopecs, blue on bluish paper | 25 0 | .. | 6 0 |
| 10 kopecs, red on pale-rose paper | 7 6 | .. | 0 6 |

**1866.**—Two values, similar design, but the currency altered from Russian kopecs to Finnish pennia. In the top label of the design is "PEN," the abbreviation of *penni*, in Swedish, or *pennia* in Finnish, and in the lower label of the framework is the value in Russian characters. The stamps were printed on tinted paper and rouletted as before.

Rouletted.

| | Unused. s. d. | | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 pen, brown on grey | 4 0 | .. | 4 0 |
| 10 pen, black on buff | 10 0 | .. | 5 0 |

**1867–70.**—Six values, all but the one mark of the same design as the previous issue. The 1 mark stamp was of special design. The central portion was the same, but the frame enclosing the arms was filled in with inscriptions of the value in Russian, Finnish, and Swedish; in Russian, reading "odna marka," on the left; in Finnish, reading "YKSI MARKKA" on the right; and in Swedish, "en mark" on the top and at the bottom. The stamps were printed on coloured papers and were rouletted as before.



Rouletted.

| | Unused. s. d. | | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 pen, brown on lilac | 20 0 | .. | — |
| 8 pen, black on green | 6 0 | .. | 2 0 |
| 10 pen, black on yellow | 30 0 | .. | 7 6 |
| 20 pen, blue on blue | 20 0 | .. | 2 0 |
| 40 pen, rose on pale-rose | 7 6 | .. | 2 0 |
| 1 mark, brown on white | — | .. | 30 0 |

**1875–82.**—Seven values. New design. The arms of Finland in reduced size in the centre in an oval, enclosed in an exterior oval band broken at the four corners with large circles for the figures of value. On this exterior oval band are inscriptions; on the top "Pennia," the value in Finnish; at the foot "penni," in Swedish; on the left is the name in Swedish, "Finland," and on the right the equivalent in Finnish, "Suomi." The stamps were machine perforated in the ordinary way. The plates of this issue were engraved at Copenhagen, and the engravers, as a sample of the quality of the work, printed a supply of the 32 pen and despatched plates and stamps to Helsingfors, where the other values and further supplies were printed. The Copenhagen print of the 32 pen is much prized by specialists and is easily distinguished, apart from the superior printing, by being perforated 14 by 13½, the locally printed stamps being perf. 11.

Perf. 11.

| | Unused. s. d. | | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 pen, grey | 0 6 | .. | 0 6 |
| 5 pen, yellow | 2 0 | .. | 0 3 |
| 8 pen, green | 5 0 | .. | 2 6 |
| 10 pen, brown | 12 0 | .. | 0 6 |
| 20 pen, blue | 6 0 | .. | 0 1 |
| 25 pen, lake | 10 0 | .. | 0 2 |
| 32 pen, rose | 10 0 | .. | 0 6 |
| 1 mark, lilac | 50 0 | .. | 1 0 |

**1883.**—Seven values. Design as in previous issue, but the colours changed, and fresh values added. The 5 pen changed from yellow to green, the 10 pen from brown to rose, the 20 pen from blue to yellow, the 25 pen from carmine to blue, the 1 mark from lilac to grey and rose, and new values of 5 marks and 10 marks.

Perf. 12½.

| | Unused. s. d. | | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 pen, green | 1 0 | .. | 0 1 |
| 10 pen, rose | 2 0 | .. | 0 2 |
| 20 pen, yellow | 2 6 | .. | 0 1 |
| 25 pen, blue | 1 6 | .. | 0 1 |
| 1 mark, grey and rose | 4 0 | .. | 0 4 |
| 5 mark, green and rose | 20 0 | .. | 20 0 |
| 10 mark, brown and rose | 25 0 | .. | 20 0 |

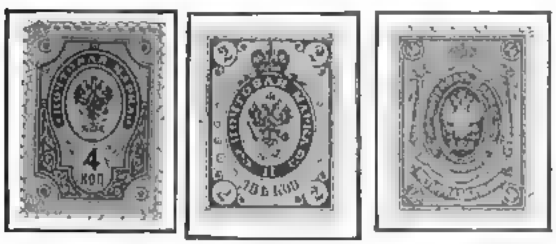
**1889–90.**—Eight values. Design as in previous issue, but modified. The exterior oval band bears the word "Finland" on the left as before, "Suomi" on the top instead of "Pennia," and the Russian equivalent for "Finland" on the right, the

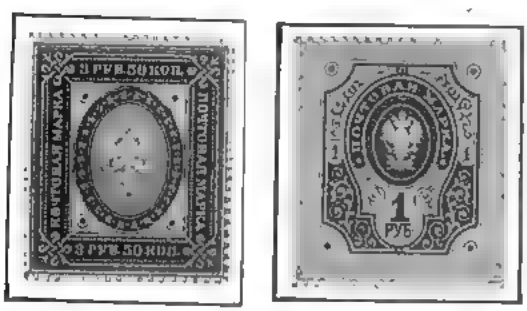
figures of value as before in large circles in the top corners; but in the lower corner circles "Pen" in the left circle and the equivalent in Russian in the right-hand circle, with the figures of value in a label between the lower circles. Perforated.

Perf. 12½.

| | Unused. s. d. | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 pen, grey | 0 2 | 0 1 |
| 5 pen, green | 0 3 | 0 1 |
| 10 pen, rose | 0 6 | 0 1 |
| 20 pen, yellow | 0 9 | 0 1 |
| 25 pen, blue | 1 3 | 0 2 |
| 1 mark, grey and rose | 3 0 | 0 3 |
| 5 marks, green and rose | 10 0 | 6 0 |
| 10 marks, brown and rose | 15 0 | 7 6 |

**1891.**—With the view of suppressing the ordinary postage stamps of Finland and advancing the Russification of the Grand Duchy, the Russian authorities decreed the use of Russian postage stamps on all correspondence between Finland and Russia. The Russian stamps provided in accordance with this decree had little distinguishing circles added to the designs. In the 1, 2, and 3 and 7 kop. they are found in graded sizes on each side of the oval; in the 4, 10, 20, and 50 kop. and 1 rouble they will be found in all four corners; in the 14 and 35 kop. they are placed on each side of the Imperial crown, and in the 3½ and 7 roubles, they are seen in the four corners formed by the oval.





Perf. various.

| | Unused. s. d. | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 kop., yellow | 0 1 | 0 1 |
| 2 kop., green | 0 2 | 0 2 |
| 3 kop., rose | 0 3 | 0 3 |
| kop., rose | 0 3 | 0 3 |
| 7 kop., indigo | 0 6 | 0 2 |
| 10 kop., indigo | 0 9 | 0 4 |
| 14 kop., carmine and blue | 1 0 | 0 6 |
| 20 kop., carmine and blue | 1 6 | 0 6 |
| 35 kop., green and purple | 2 6 | 2 0 |
| 50 kop., green and purple | 2 6 | 2 0 |
| 1 r., orange and brown | 5 0 | 2 0 |
| 3½ r., grey and black | 20 0 | 10 0 |
| 7 r., yellow and black | 50 0 | — |

**1901.**—Early in this year stamps in the types of the current stamps of Russia, but with values expressed in Russian and Finnish, finally superseded stamps with the arms of Finland. Six values were issued. The 2 pen, 5 pen and 20 pen are of one type, and the 10 pen, and 1 mark and 10 marks of separate designs.

Perf. 13½.

| | Unused. s. d. | Used. s. d. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 pen, yellow | 0 1 | 0 1 |
| 5 pen, green | 0 1 | 0 1 |
| 10 pen, carmine | 0 2 | 0 1 |
| 20 pen, blue | 0 4 | 0 1 |
| 1 mark, grey and mauve | — | 0 2 |
| 10 mark, grey and black | 10 6 | 7 6 |

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GOOD CUSTOMERS ARE SCARCE.
From the picture by F. W. Burton

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# CHRISTMAS with the Black and White Artist.

BY

**A. B. COOPER.**

"BLIND MAN'S BUFF."
*Drawn by Randolph Caldicott.*

WHO invented the modern Christmas? Some people say it was Charles Dickens, because he wrote "A Christmas Carol" and "The Chimes," and because the modern spirit of philanthropy owes its inception to him as much as to any one. Some say it was the Prince Consort who invented Christmas, because he introduced the Christmas tree from Germany, one of the few German imports for which we show a proper sentiment of thankfulness. Of course, we all know that Christmas was invented—it isn't real. Once in a decade the weather forces us to believe that the poets who have gone into raptures over the manifold charms of the month of May were not all gibbering idiots, and once in twenty years, perhaps, Christmas lives up to its apocryphal character. The trees lace their frost-bespangled branches against a sky of cerulean hue, the ice on the ponds rings like a bell, and even the "waits," in the shape of the village brass band, commit musical murder on the lawn. Sometimes, indeed, but even more seldom, the snow has been known to fall upon Christmas Eve, and the first Christmas card one has received has been the bewitching peep through the bedroom curtains "at the wide world whelmed in white."

But there was a man who came later than Dickens or the Prince Consort, who had a hand, and a big hand—if one may say so—in the making of the modern Christmas. If the snow tarries, the Christmas numbers do not; they fall in thicker showers every year, and the man who made them real Christmas numbers, and not merely magazines issued on the approach of Christmas, was Randolph Caldicott, that most delightful, humoursome artist who, in the early days of the *Graphic* set all the world chuckling over his delightful sketches. Funnily enough, too, he helped to make the modern Christmas by imagining the old-fashioned Christmas and carving the new out of the old. He absolutely ignored the fact that the railway train had any existence at all. His only modes of locomotion are the coach and the cob, and his only sports are hunting out of doors and hunting indoors—the quarry, in the latter case, being invariably a slipper, or the pretty girl whom the "blind man" will persist in catching. If there never was a Christmas like the one Randolph Caldicott depicts with his inimitable pencil, and if such a Christmas never did nor ever will exist, at least we owe a debt of gratitude to this kindly artist for the wonderful way in which he drops us into the middle of a sort of delightful Christmas fairyland, in which everybody is dancing or laughing or kissing under the mistletoe, or sitting in unimaginably cosy corners, or getting stuck, wheel-deep, in a snowdrift—a much more delightful thing in a picture than in reality—or sitting round a well-spread table while the cook brings in an impossibly large plum-pudding.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH "A GENTLEMAN OF THE ROAD."
From the drawing by Ernest Prater.

Yes, geniality is his tone. Yet his life was not an easy nor, perhaps, a happy one. Born at Chester in 1846, he was a bank clerk at Whitchurch, in Shropshire, for six years, and it was not until 1872 that he came to London to attempt to make a livelihood as an artist. In 1874 he illustrated Washington Irving's "Old Christmas," and a little later the same author's "Bracebridge Hall." No one noticed them for ever so long, yet they eventually made his fame. Seldom have pictures so fully realised the author's spirit and intention. It was this success, doubtless, which gave Caldicott his cue, and Christmas remained his theme to the end. The rural beauties of Cheshire and Shropshire—their old halls and farms, their meets, markets, fairs, and village sports, dwelt in his memory and were reproduced for the delight of the world. Everything he did, he did delightfully, and now he has a niche all to himself.

THE RIVAL WAITS.

From the picture by A. Forestier.

The days of the Gentleman of the Road are over, but only the advent of steam and electricity gave them their final *coup de grâce*. With means of communication enormously facilitated by the railway and the telegraph wire, law once and for all got the better of licence, and the Duvals, the Jerry Abershaws and the Turpins found their occupation gone. Yet long prior to the invention of the locomotive, highwaymen upon English roads had grown scarce, and the game scarcely worth the candle. There was a Scot of the name of Macadam, who largely assisted in their extermination. It was he who made the first great improvement in the surface of our highways by evenly distributing broken stones, and these macadamised roads gave such an impetus to travel by coach that the highways became much more frequented, and the occurrence of break-downs was so rare that the highwayman's best opportunity was gone.

The days of good Queen Anne were lively times for the belated traveller. Happy the travelling party who got over Bagshot or Hownslow Heaths without encountering a horseman with a loaded blunderbuss. Mr.

HOW THE CHRISTMAS TREE WAS INVENTED.
From the picture by Lawson Wood.

Ernest Prater gives us here a true picture of those times. It is drawn on the road between Egham and Bagshot. Out from the pine-trees' shade comes a mounted highwayman who, as the practice was, shoots one of the leaders. The poor beast falls down in his traces and the heavy family coach comes to a standstill upon the moon-lit road. At the sound of the shot the young gallant within drops down the window and fires at a venture at the shadowy form without. By the greatest good-luck his bullet finds its billet and the masked robber, with a grunt and a gasp, slides out of his saddle. For good or ill his days are ended. His horse, trained to a nicety, stands still and looks almost as if he grieved for his ill-starred master.

Taking the coach-lamp in hand, the dandy goes to see what damage he has done, for he may only have winged his enemy, and, at this Christmas season, thoughts of mercy are not wholly absent from his mind. The post-boys, and the two trembling ladies—evidently going to a ball at some great country house—await his report with nervous apprehension.

"MOTHER! NURSE! HELP! BABY HAS GOT STUCK IN THE CHIMNEY LOOKING FOR SANTA CLAUS, AND IS MAKING HIMSELF PERFECTLY MISERABLE."

From the picture by John Hassall.

Fred W. Burton is very much at home with ancient hostelries, Elizabethan mansions, and wrinkled old men—they are his speciality. In his picture *Good Customers are Scarce*, he is at his best. Quite apart from the humour of the scene, the picture is particularly well balanced, and the white-washed door-post upon which appears the legend: "John Bung sells good beere" might fittingly bear the inscription: "Look upon this picture and upon that." To the right, the bowing landlord in his bob wig, with his old dame lurking in the background, ready to put in a word if necessary, is doing all that extreme politeness can do to persuade the lace-beruffled horseman, scratching his chin dubiously, to remain for the night. At this roadside inn, with its mean accommodation, the aristocracy are rare visitants, but John Bung ought to have remembered that several little birds in the hand are worth much more than one big one in the bush, for, while host and hostess are both engaged at the front of the house, the birds left alone in the tap-room are flying out of the window. And what

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AN INTERRUPTED CHRISTMAS TRIP ON THE JAMES RIVER.
From the drawing by Percy F. S. Spence.

strange birds they are! They are evidently a band of strolling professional "Waits," who, having found the coppers of the charitable all too few, have, nevertheless, yielded to the calls of the inner man and dropped into "Ye Fishes Head" for bite and sup. Fortune who had hitherto given them the cold shoulder, smiles on them at last—at least, from their point of view—for, just as they are beginning to dread the reckoning, the stylish stranger at the door affects a diversion; the enemy, in the shape of the host and hostess, concentrate all their attention upon the left flank, and thus enable the occupants of the bar parlour to effect a strategic retreat through the window. Notice how anxious the old sinner with the fiddle is; the man with the drum has an air of happy gaiety worthy of a better cause, while "bass viol," who is already well round the corner, is probably muttering to himself a proverb which ends with the words "the devil take the hindmost." The "hindmost," however, although he is not yet out of the window, looks the most unconcerned of the crew. Think of the dismay of the worthy landlord and his wife when, having possibly failed to persuade their new guest to enter their portal, they return to find the door of the cage open and the musical quartet flown!

Mr. A. Forestier is an extremely prolific artist, and it is many years since he was not widely represented in the Christmas Numbers. His conscientious care as to detail and finish is very marked. Indeed, one cannot help thinking often that his pictures are much better, both in subject and treatment, than many highly finished paintings to be seen upon the walls of the Royal Academy. But the picture which we have chosen to represent him in this article is selected chiefly for its humour. It is entitled *The Rival Waits*. What a battle royal! There is not much music left, evidently, in the banjo, and what little bit there is will be knocked out of it when it descends upon the head of the prostrate player of the ophicleide. Notice what a splendid knuckle-duster the cornet makes, while the trombone player has hit upon the best dodge of all, for, shooting out the long slide, he has brought the end into violent contact with "the nose of the player of

the clarionet" (as the French primer would have it).

Mr. Lawson Wood is an artist who has made great strides of late years. Let readers of THE CAPTAIN turn over the pages of recent numbers and "spot" his work. He can turn his hand to any subject, but he works the pre-historic idea with great humour, almost equalling E. T. Reed, of *Punch* fame—although, unlike him, he seldom turns his sketches to political account. The very notion of an Ichthyosaurus, a Mastodon, or a Flying Lizard coming suddenly upon your Christmas picnic is in itself suggestive of nightmare, and, therefore, peculiarly Christmassy.

John Hassall is frankly humorous. Hanging in his delightful studio, and almost covering one of its walls, is a huge oil-painting of some historical event, the nature of which I forget. It represents his early yearnings for the stately fame of the Academician; but posters, and humorous pages in the *Sketch*, *Tatler*, *et hoc genus rerum*, claimed him for their own. And is he not already immortal? Did he not draw for the first number of THE CAPTAIN the speaking likeness of the one and only Old Fag? None other is genuine—the same Old Fag year in, year out—immutably genial, irrepressibly humorous, eternally young.

Hassall is not only original in his subjects, but novel in his methods. It is literally possible that he obtained that flat, grey effect in the drawing by which he is represented in this series by rubbing it face downwards on the floor, or by performing a step dance upon it. Any method by which the right effect can be produced he considers legitimate, and who can say that he is wrong?

In the early days of New England the fierce red-Indians of the back-woods were a very terrible danger. Earlier still, in the days when Virginia was first settled they were dominant indeed, and they swarmed on the banks of the James, Pamunkey and Rappahannock. It is to this period that Mr. F. S. Spence's picture belongs. The Virginian and his daughter are going by river, for there was no other mode of travelling, to one of the up-country farms to spend Christmas. Suddenly a band of Redskins appears and pursues them. The settlers paddle for dear life, but the Indians gain upon them, and an arrow, just missing the girl's shoulder, plunges into the snow-covered bank. Let us hope that the gallant girl and her grim-visaged father reach the friendly shelter of the farm.

Nothing pleases Mr. Tom Browne better than a trip to Holland, and the quaint costumes and caricature-like visages of many of the country-folk seem specially to suit his genius. How admirably he has caught the expressions of these two cronies, and what infinite satisfaction they seem to be sucking through their huge cigars. But the lady looks grim. She does not approve of levity. She is on business bent, and takes even her pleasures sadly. Yet she is a good wife. Note how beautifully she has patched her husband's trousers. These two are wishing each other A Happy New Year. It is a seasonable greeting. Pass it on.

A SEASONABLE GREETING.
From the drawing by Tom Browne, R.I.

# THE ADVENTURES OF DICK SELMES.

By BERTRAM MITFORD,

Author of "The Gun-Runner," "The King's Assegai," "The Sign of the Spider," &c. &c.

*ILLUSTRATED BY W. A. BOWRING.*

## No. 4.—THE EXPRESS RIDERS.

CORPORAL SANDGATE and Trooper Stokes rode forth from the Police camp on express duty.

They were entrusted with very important despatches indeed. These were to the effect that, owing to the accidental explosion of an ammunition waggon, the large force of Frontier Armed and Mounted Police in camp at the Kangala might find itself, at any moment, alarmingly short of that essential article; and contained urgent injunctions to the authorities in charge of the border post—where an ample supply was stored—to send on a sufficiency of the same, under escort, without a moment's delay.

The two men had been specially selected for this duty. Sandgate was a young Englishman of good family, who, like many a superfluous or younger son at that time, had emigrated as a recruit for the frontier corps, beginning at the bottom. He was a fine, sportsmanlike, athletic fellow who could ride anything and anywhere, and had soon made his step up the ladder of promotion. The other man, Stokes, was a wiry, hard-bitten Colonial, no longer quite young, who had been some years in the Police, but had twice lost the rank of corporal owing to an inconvenient hankering after the bottle. When away from its temptations, as in the present case, he was one of the most useful men in the Force. Each, we have said, had been specially picked for this duty; Sandgate for his pluck and dash, and the reputation for readiness of resource which he had managed to set up, Stokes for his knowledge of veldt-craft.

The two express-riders started from the Kangala Camp at moon-rise, which took place early in the evening. It was calculated that, by riding all night, they should reach their objective, Fort Isiwa, not much later than the following mid-day. They could, by no means, cover the distance in anything like a straight line, nor was there, in many places, the vestige of a track. This was where Stokes' veldt-craft was to come in: but even so, their route skirted the turbulent Gudhluka Reserve. The swarming inhabitants of the latter were just then in a particularly dangerous state of simmering unrest, and would as likely as not make short work of a couple of members of a body whom they loved not at all, given an opportunity. Once beyond this danger belt, however, there would be little or no risk, for the country was sparsely populated further on, and its inhabitants less disaffected. So the programme before these two was to push on as best they were able, so as to get over the more risky portion of their ride under cover of night.

This being the case, it might have seemed a little strange that, having arrived at a point about five miles from camp, where the far from distinct waggon track forked into two, they should have reined in their horses, and sat listening.

"Tell you what, Sandgate," muttered Stokes, cramming a quid of tobacco into his mouth—under the circumstances, for obvious reasons, the pipe must be foregone with stern self-denial—"Tell you what. It's no good our waiting. He won't come. He's thought better of it. Greenoak's likely turned up again and stopped it."

Both men sat for a couple of minutes longer, their feet kicked loose from their stirrups. Then, as they were on the point of resuming their way, a sound caught their ears—the tread of a horse,

from the direction in which they had just come.

"Hallo, you fellows! About given me up, I suppose?" said Dick Selmes in a low, excited tone, as he rode up.

"We were just going to," answered Stokes, who was inclined to be short of speech and a bit sour towards so obvious a specimen of the gilded youth as this one. "And, I say, if you could keep that confounded brute of yours from jingling that swagger bit, why it'd be just as well. We don't want to be heard all over the Gudhluka Reserve."

"He'll be all right directly, soon as he's let off a little more steam," said Sandgate good-humouredly, with a glance of approval at Dick's spirited and well-groomed mount, which, in sheer enjoyment of the fresh freedom of the veldt, was tossing his head and blowing clouds of vapour upon the cool night air.

That Dick Selmes had been able to join the two express riders had involved some plotting; for, from the moment he had heard of their errand, incidentally through Inspector Chambers, to whose troop they belonged, he had firmly made up his mind that join them he would. But, on putting this to the Inspector, that worthy had promptly vetoed the whole business—subsequently compromising, however, by suggesting that the matter be submitted to the Commandant.

The latter, however, a fine old frontiersman born and bred, took a different view. He was a reserved, undemonstrative man, but had taken a liking to this dare-devil youngster by reason of his pluck and adaptability.

"I don't really see why he shouldn't go if he's keen on it, Chambers," he said. "The experience will do the young chap no harm, and he seems able to take care of himself. Greenoak keeps him too much in leading strings. Oh, *that*—" as the Inspector, with a dry laugh, recalled a certain adventure in Vunisa's location which would have cost our friend his life but for the shrewdness and promptitude of Harley Greenoak. "Well, yes. But, on the whole, Sandgate and Stokes are thoroughly reliable men, and will keep him in order. Of course, I need know nothing about it officially, nor need you; but if he should find his chance of slipping away after them, why, after all, he's only our guest here, and can come and go as he chooses," concluded the Commandant, with a twinkle in his eyes.

Harley Greenoak was away upon a critical and delicate mission which he had undertaken as a personal favour to the Commandant. As things were at present, he argued, his charge could come to no harm, at any rate for a day or two, by which time he himself would be back. All of which accounted for the comparative facility wherewith Dick had slipped away—a facility which struck our two express riders as strange.

Something of a friendship had grown up between Dick Selmes and Corporal Sandgate. They were of the same age, had the same tastes, and, hailing from adjacent neighbourhoods in the Old Country, had acquaintances in common. On such they chatted in subdued tones, as they held on their way rapidly through the calm beauty of the African night. So far, the said way was easy, as under the unerring guidance of Trooper Stokes they crossed each rolling upland, mimosa-dotted and grassy. Here and there, far away, the mysterious dimness was relieved by the red glow of a grass fire. Or could it be the weird signal of plotting savages? Soon, however, the ground became more rugged. They forded a small river, rippling deep down in a thickly bushed valley, and the steeds drank gratefully of its cool, if slightly brackish, water. Then on again.

"We must swing back again here," said Stokes, as they drew rein on top of a ridge to loosen the girths and give the horses a quarter of an hour's rest and feed. "There are kraals in front of us. I can smell 'em."

"The deuce you can?" said Dick, vividly interested. "I can't. You're not getting at us, old chap, are you?"

To this Stokes vouchsafed no reply. He stroked his thick, wiry beard, looking unutterable contempt.

They resumed their way, sometimes making a considerable *détour* to avoid a suspicious neighbourhood. Once the barking of dogs, alarmingly near, caused a thrill of anxious excitement. Had the tramp of their horse-hoofs been heard, they wondered, as they swerved off as noiselessly as possible. At last, what looked like a building loomed in front of them. Just behind it were three or four native huts.

"I thought so," exclaimed Stokes. "Blamed if this isn't old Shelbury's store. We've come a *leetle* more out of our road than we need have done, Sandgate."

"We'll make it up. I say, hadn't we

better off-saddle and have some grub?" suggested Dick Selmes, cheerfully

Stokes looked at him sourly.

"Grub!" he echoed, "you'll get non o' that here. Any fool could see that Shelbury's cleared. Why, the place is all stove in and the whole show looted."

Closer investigation proved such to be the case. The door hung on one hinge, and seemed very much battered.

As they rode on, neither Sandgate nor Dick noticed that Stokes kept rather behind. The moon, too, had almost sunk, wherefore, perhaps, they further failed to notice that his tan-cord uniform jacket bulged.

It was just at the dark hour before dawn when Sandgate called a halt.

"We might safely do half an hour's snooze here," he said. "The gees want that amount of rest. You turn in, Selmes,

"NOW THEN, SELMES. TIME," HE WHISPERED.

"We'll push on," said Sandgate, with an anxious glance at the moon, now getting low. "The further we do that under cover of night the better."

But Stokes, rapping out something about just taking half a squint inside, and catching them up again in a jiffy, was already off his horse. The other two, resuming their conversation about old times and scenes at home, held on the way he had pointed out to them. So taken up were they that it was quite a little while before it occurred to them that it might be advisable to pull up and wait for Stokes. Nor had they long to wait.

"Just as I thought," he said, coming up. "The whole shoot has been cleared from top to bottom. You never saw such a mess in your life. But there's no one dead inside."

and I'll do horse-guard. No—no—don't wrangle, man; each minute of that means so much less hard-earned snooze; besides, I'm in command here. Stokes, you look done, too. Well, off you go, both of you."

The latter, with a cavernous yawn, was off like a log. Dick, with a sleepy laugh, followed suit. Then Sandgate, loosening the girths, but not off-saddling, allowed the horses to graze, their bridles trailing on the ground, and began to watch.

The place in which they had halted was among some broken rocks, a small hollow in fact, and admirably adapted for a hiding place. The back was overhung by rugged boulders, and in front, beyond a lip of the same, the ground fell away in a rugged slope to the bottom of a deep bushy kloof. To Sandgate, left to his lonely vigil, that brief

half-hour seemed long enough. To the other two, heavy in slumber, it was as a flash.

"Now then, Selmes. Time," he whispered, with a hand on the other's shoulder. In a trice Dick was up, but yawning pathetically. He shivered, too, for a thin damp mist was stealing athwart the rocks and bush sprays.

"All serene," he said, ready and alert. "Kick up the other fellow."

But although this was done, and that literally, for all the effect it produced Stokes might as well have been dead, or a bit of timber. And then, as an acrid fume rose poisonous upon the cold morning air, Sandgate stood aghast with wrath and horror. His colleague and subordinate was drunk—dead drunk.

Yet how? In a moment something of the truth flashed across his brain. That wretched trader's store they had passed! Stokes must have found grog in there, which had been overlooked by the plunderers. His cursed instinct had moved him to go inside and explore. There was no sign of any bottle about Stokes, certainly, but this he would have been slim enough to drop unseen and unheard. Now the mystery of his lagging behind stood explained.

"Great Scott! And the despatches!" exclaimed Sandgate, horrified.

"Take 'em on, and leave him here to get sober," suggested Dick. "He deserves it."

But Sandgate objected to deserting a comrade in dangerous country. He himself would be reduced to the ranks, of course, kicked out of the Force most likely, but he could not abandon a comrade. To this Dick suggested that he should remain with Stokes while Sandgate rode on.

"That won't do either, Selmes," said the latter, gloomily. "You're new to this country, and in my charge. No—that won't do."

"But think of the vital importance of the despatches," urged Dick. "This fellow has brought it all upon himself. Besides, he's supposed to know his way about better than both of us put together. So *I* say, let him take his chance."

"We'll have one more try," said Sandgate.

They had, and it was an exhaustive one. They shook and hustled the stupefied man, and threw in his face what little water remained in their bottles. In vain. Stokes merely gave an inarticulate grunt, and subsided into deep slumber again. Then they tried another plan—that of placing him on his feet by main force. Still in vain. The drunken man slid to the ground again, and in their efforts to keep him up both Sandgate and Dick lost their balance, stumbled, and fell with him.

Before they could rise several pairs of muscular hands had gripped them, and bulky forms pressed them down. So effectually were they pinioned that they could not even reach their revolvers, which were promptly reft from them. The little hollow which had been their resting-place was swarming with Kafirs, who had stolen upon them like snakes, what time their attention was taken up by the endeavour to restore consciousness to Stokes: even the warning which should have been conveyed by the alarmed snorting and restiveness of the horses had escaped them. They were absolutely in the power of these savages, who had surprised and captured them without giving them an opportunity of striking a blow in defence of their lives, and, in the case of one of them, of his trust.

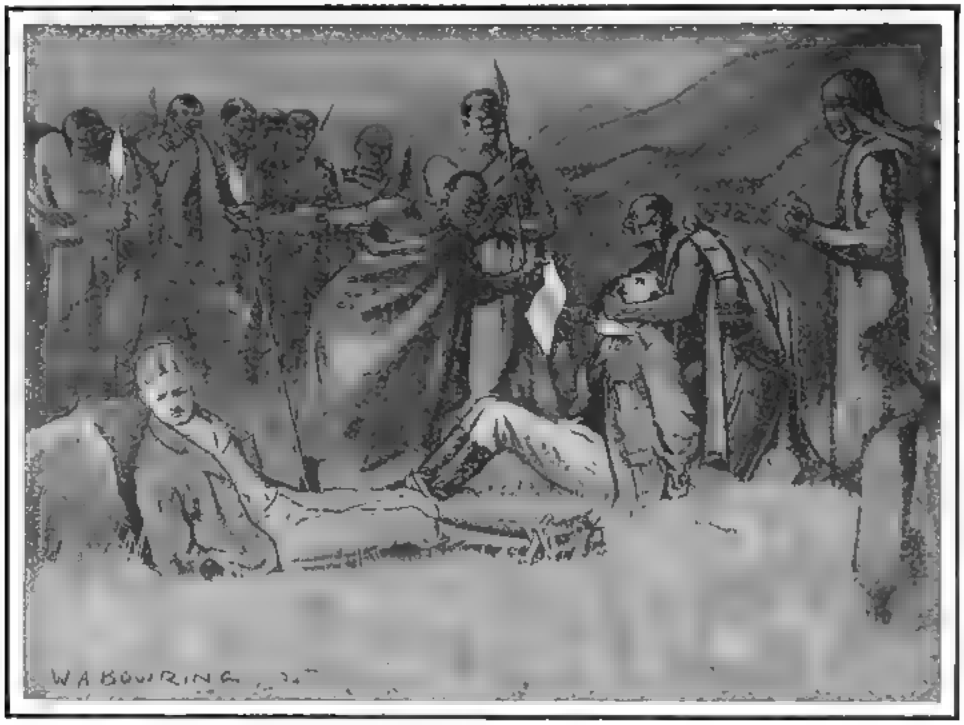
The first thing their captors did was to bind them securely with the *reims* cut from their horses' head-stalls. Then a hurried consultation began among them. A man who seemed in authority—a tall, evil-looking ruffian—issued an order. The unconscious Stokes was seized and roughly turned over, face uppermost. A moment's examination sufficing to satisfy them that he was hopelessly drunk, half a dozen assegais were driven through his body, as coolly as though his murderers were merely slaughtering a sheep; while his comrades lay, sick with horror at the sight, and justifiably apprehensive as to what their own fate was destined to be.

They had not long to wait. Under the hurried directions of another man, a short, thick-set Kafir—not the one in seeming authority—they were subjected to a quick but exhaustive search. Of course, the despatch to the officer commanding at Fort Isiwa came to light

"This—what it say?" said the short Kafir, in very fair English, tapping the document which he held open by one corner.

"Oh, it's merely a letter asking for a few more horses to be sent on to Kangala," answered Sandgate with as much coolness as he could assume

"That a lie," was the prompt response. Then, threateningly, "Read that—out, so I hear it."




"NOW—WILL YOU READ?"

"If you can talk English, surely you can read it," answered Sandgate.

"Read it. Read"—thrusting the paper before his face. "Read—or——"

"Or what?"

"That," said the Kafir, pointing to the body of their murdered comrade, which the savages had already stripped, and which lay, a sight hideous and gory enough to strike terror into the survivors. But these were of the flower and pick of their nation, and to neither of them did it for one instant occur to purchase his life by a revelation which might result in calamitous, even appalling, consequences. To both the moment was crucial, as they took in the barbarous forms, the ring of cruel countenances, the dark, grisly hands grasping the ready and murderous assegais. Both were staring horrid Death in the face very closely.

"Well, I shan't read it," said Sandgate decisively.

"Nor I," echoed Dick Selmes.

At a word from the English-speaking Kafir, a powerful, ochre-smeared ruffian seized Sandgate by the chin, and, jerking back his head, laid the sharp edge of an assegai blade against his distended throat.

"Now—will you read?" came the question again.

The natural fear of death, and that in a horrible form, brought the dews of perspiration to the unfortunate man's brow, as the evil savage, whose hand quivered with eagerness to inflict the final slash, actually divided the skin. Yet, looking his tormentors steadily in the face, he answered,

"No."

The man in authority said a few words. The assegai blade was lowered, and Sandgate's head was released.

"Now—" went on the English-speaking Kafir, "we not kill you—not yet. We try hot assegai blade—between toes. That make you read, hey?" And even as he spoke a fire was in process of kindling, which a few minutes sufficed to blow up into a roaring blaze.

If the imminence of a horrible form of death had been appalling to these two, it was nothing to this. Should they be able to stand firm under the ghastly torture that awaited, the very thought of which was enough to turn them sick? And, yet—the issue at stake! The war-cloud, though brooding, had not yet burst, but did it get

to the knowledge of their enemies that the only force which overawed them, and to that extent held them in check, was short of ammunition, why, the effect would be to let loose tens of thousands of raging devils, not only upon that force itself, but upon the whole of the more or less defenceless frontier. This was in the minds of both, as Sandgate's boot was quickly cut from his foot, while one fiend, who had plucked a red-hot blade from the fire, stood, eagerly awaiting his orders.

"Now—will you read?"

"No," shouted Sandgate, his eyes staring at his questioner in horror and despair. Then followed a long and shuddering groan, in which, and in the convulsive writhe of the victim, Dick Selmes seemed to share. His comrade's agony was his own.

At a sign from the English-speaking Kafir the instrument of torment was withdrawn.

"First taste," he said grimly. "This go on all day. How you like that? Now—you read?"

"No!" thundered the victim.

Then something else thundered. Crack! Crack! The barbarian with the hot iron pitched heavily forward, shot through the brain—while another of those holding Sandgate shared the same fate. Crack! Crack! Not a moment of interval—down went two more—and those immediately next to the prisoners—then two more in the same way. Instinctively the others sprang back, realising that here was the point of danger, but still that unceasing fire went on, pitilessly decimating them. Wildly they looked for the point whence it came, but vainly, for the morning mist had so thickened that they could but dimly see the outline of the rocks which overhung the back of the hollow. A great and thunderous roar, accompanying a hail of heavy slugs into the very thick of them, completed their discomfiture. With a wholesome recollection of the artillery practice some of them had witnessed on the banks of the Tsolo River a week or two before, they cried that the *Amapolise* were upon them, and disappeared helter-skelter into the mist and the bush at the lower side of the hollow.

Our two friends could hardly believe in their good fortune. Yet—no escape was to be theirs. A man was beside them—a black man—and in his hand a knife. They would be murdered, of course, in the hour of rescue. But—he was cutting their bonds.

"Quick! Come with me," he said in English, at the same time collecting the Police carbines and revolvers lying on the ground, which the panic-stricken Kafirs had omitted to carry away. Him they followed—Sandgate limping painfully—as he led the way to the rocks above. Here, ensconced in a cleft which commanded the hollow beneath, sat Harley Greenoak coolly refilling the magazine of a Winchester repeating rifle, while an old elephant gun of enormous calibre lay on the ground beside him.

"You're well out of that," he said, hardly looking up. "Lucky I got back to camp when I did. John Voss came in at the same time with the notion he had picked up that Pahlandle's crowd were particularly on the look-out for express riders. I formed my plan there and then; borrowed Mainwaring's Winchester—dashed bad shooting-gun it is too—and, with John Voss's old elephant *roer* to give the idea of artillery, why—brought the whole thing off. Even then the mist counted for something."

In John Voss both now recognised one of the smartest native detectives attached to the F.A.M. Police.

"Come along," went on Greenoak, rising. "We must get on with those despatches. No time to lose."

"But—they are lost," said Sandgate wearily.

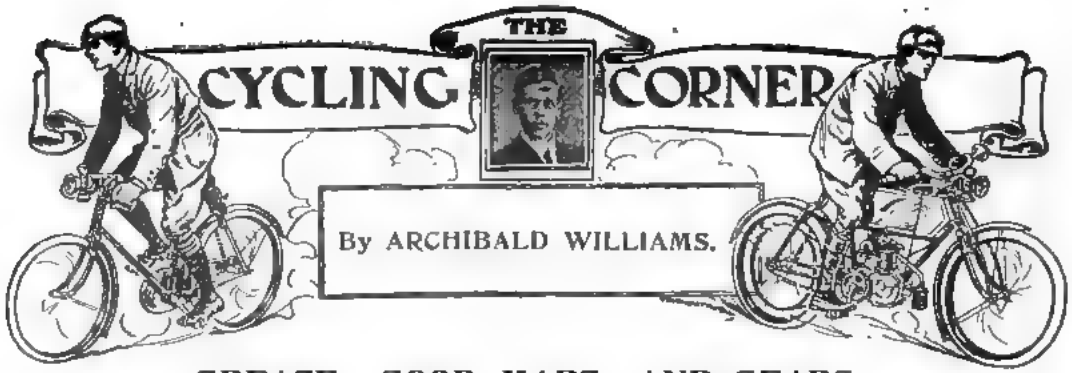
"No they ain't. John's got 'em."

The black man grinned as he handed the paper over to the corporal.

"But our horses?" said Dick Selmes, dismayed.

"Well, I got back one of them," answered Greenoak equably. "One of you can ride John's—he's quite able to make his way back to the Kangala alone. So there are mounts for the three of us, and the sooner we get on to the Isiwa fort the better."

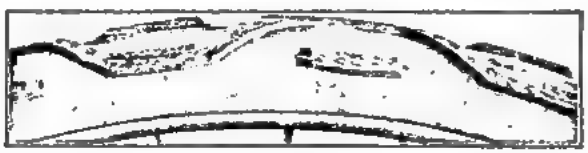
And, with Harley Greenoak in the van, we may be sure that those despatches did reach Fort Isiwa, and not very much behind time at that.



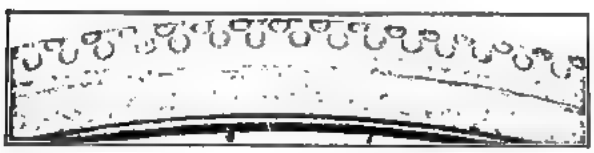

# GREASE; GOOD MAPS; AND GEARS.

SEVERAL months ago—on last Whit-Tuesday—a considerable number of people visited the Cadogan Garage, Sydney Street, Chelsea, to witness the trials of an array of anti-sideslip contrivances on an area of concrete liberally besmeared with Thames mud and soft soap. The C.T.C. officials who inaugurated the trials, were animated by the very laudable desire to discover some really practical device for exorcising the bogey which haunts cyclists on greasy roads. Over thirty competitors entered for the contest. Each had to mount his machine on the unprepared surface, ride on to the "buttered" area, make a semi-circular turn to the left and return to *terra firma*. He then had to repeat the trip, turning this time to the right; and afterwards went through both manœuvres again at a speed of about ten miles an hour. Many fearful and wonderful contrivances put in an appearance, and to the onlookers at least the performances and mishaps of the bold riders gave plenty of amusement.

These preliminary tests completed, eight devices were selected, and their representatives rode them 100 miles a day for four days over ordinary roads, to determine their "staying power." Five stood the racket.



NO. 17. FIRST PRIZE, £100.



NO. 23. SECOND PRIZE, £50.

NO. 11. FOURTH PRIZE, £25.

The anti-sideslip devices which won first, second, and fourth prizes in the trials inaugurated by the Council of the Cyclists' Touring Club last spring. The top photograph shows a serpentine rubber ridge; the middle photograph, a leather band with steel studs; the lowest, spiral springs.

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THE CONCLUSION ARRIVED AT by the C.T.C. officials is worth quoting:

"In summarising the results that have attended the competition we think that it is but right to say that in so far as the discovery of a perfect and easy-applied remedy for sideslip is concerned the competition has not realised our hopes. It has, however, demonstrated the fact that the pneumatic tyre, as commonly employed, might be made less liable to sideslip if suitable, though more pronounced, corrugations or ridges were moulded on the tread somewhat after the manner of the device to which we have awarded first prize. Such a modification of the existing practice would admittedly detract somewhat from the speed of the tyre, but it would not sensibly diminish the comfort of the rider; and to the thousands who put safety before speed it would not fail to recommend itself."

We must, therefore, wait till the manufacturers take the hint. Meanwhile ordinary care will stave off disaster during

999 out of 1000 rides. To be more explicit, we must stick to the

### Good Old Rules.

(1) Take corners slowly.

(2) Keep to the centre of the road as much as possible.

(3) Keep tyres well inflated.

(4) Cross tramlines at a considerable angle, and don't change direction till the back wheel is clear of the lines.

(5) Apply brakes gently.

That management will hold a cycle up under the worst conditions I proved last summer while riding a motor cycle forty miles over dreadfully greasy roads between Wincanton and Taunton. They were so bad that in several places where I had to dismount to pass a vehicle I found it difficult to get on again, owing to the lack of a proper foothold for the push-off. Though I should not like to lay down the law unduly, I will go so far as to say that the side-slip bogey is perhaps made too much of. My whole experience of cycling includes only three spills from this cause, and two of them might have been avoided had I not ridden unawares on to "grease." Perhaps some readers will exclaim, "Oh! you come down *our* way and then——" Well, I think I have sampled nearly all sorts—in the southern parts of England at any rate.

### A Useful Road Book.

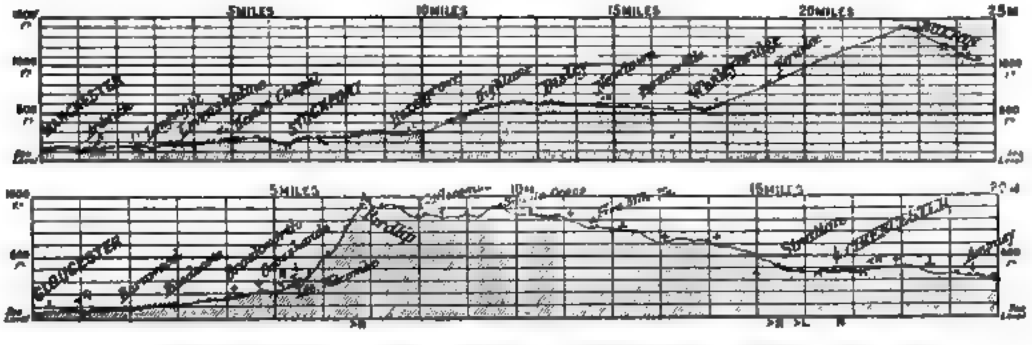
In a previous chapter I referred to the advantages of using maps on which are marked contours and figures denoting heights above sea level. By collating these figures and measuring off distances you could draw a very fairly accurate profile of the road between any two points. But it is hardly worth while taking the trouble, as the business has already been done thoroughly in a series of Road Books published by Messrs. Gall and Inglis of Edinburgh. They have kindly supplied me with two blocks as samples of the contours given. I selected as typical a stretch of the main road between Manchester and Buxton; and another of that between Cirencester and Gloucester, the latter including the notorious Birdlip Hill, which has, in places, a gradient of 1 in 7. From the summit one gets, I remember, a glorious view.

The profiles are on the scale of 4–5 miles to the inch horizontally, and 1600–2000 feet to the inch vertically. English roads occupy three volumes, being divided into Northern; South-Eastern; and Western sections: Scotch and Irish roads one volume each. There are about 500 contours to the volume. The price is 2*s.* per volume in cloth; 3*s.* 6*d.* in leather. In addition Messrs. Gall and Inglis publish at one shilling an abridged edition of the three English sections. I can highly recommend these books.

### The New Sturmey-Archer Gear.

Invention never stands still. The makers of the above-named gear have lately greatly improved its details. The wire operating the gear is now arranged to enter the hub on the right side. Formerly, it was on the step side, and caught the foot, while the hole of entry admitted dirt and dust. The gear ratios have also been changed from 80; 100; 125 to 76; 100; 131½; and there is an indicator, seen through a hole in the step, which makes the adjustment of the cable a very easy matter, instead of mere guesswork. The internal mechanism has been so altered that the teeth are always in mesh, so that the feet will not fly round through missing the gear when changing.

*Correspondents should give names and addresses in all cases, so that queries may be answered, if necessary, through the post.*




TWO EXAMPLES OF THE CONTOUR SECTION—ILLUSTRATIONS IN MESSRS. GALL AND INGLIS' ROAD BOOKS.

# Banking as a Profession.

JEROME, in his immortal book—"Three Men in a Boat"—is voicing a popular but erroneous belief when he says of one of his characters—"George goes to sleep at a bank from ten till four each day, except Saturdays, when they wake him up and put him outside at two." Any young fellow who starts his career in the employ of one of the great joint stock banks, labouring under the delusion that this is a realistic picture of bank life, will find himself woefully mistaken.

Of course, there are small country and suburban branches where the staffs experience considerable difficulty in keeping their time occupied, but only a very small proportion of the twenty thousand bank clerks in the British Isles find their way into these "lazy men's paradises."

In London the banks are open to the public from nine till four, which means that the tellers, who have the shortest hours, have to be down before nine in the morning to get their cash up from the safes. The minute hand is flying round towards five in the afternoon before they are at liberty to wend their way homewards. The remainder of the staffs, with the exception of the high officials, commence work before the cashiers, and finish from one to two hours after them.

The writer has no hesitation in saying that the work of the bank clerk is greater, more difficult, and more responsible than that of the ordinary clerk in a cotton, corn, produce, or any similar business. It is one continual round of work all day long. Going out for a cup of tea or coffee is practically unknown. From half to three-quarters of an hour has to suffice the juniors for lunch, while on Saturday (the busiest day in the week) even the seniors consider themselves fortunate if they can snatch fifteen minutes for a "snack," and often have to content themselves with a couple of sandwiches eaten while posting a ledger. It is a striking commentary on the strain that not 10 per cent. live to retire.

At the half-yearly balances in June and December, the bank clerk has to "stay late" for a week or more, willy-nilly, and not infrequently "sees the New Year in" at the office. Dinner money is, of course, allowed, and sometimes the authorities will go so far as to provide free supper on the premises.

It requires a special Act of Parliament to close a bank, and although the other offices in the district may have "a day off" to celebrate some local event, the bank clerk has to be at his post at the usual hour, and even if he should not work so hard he is still "on duty."

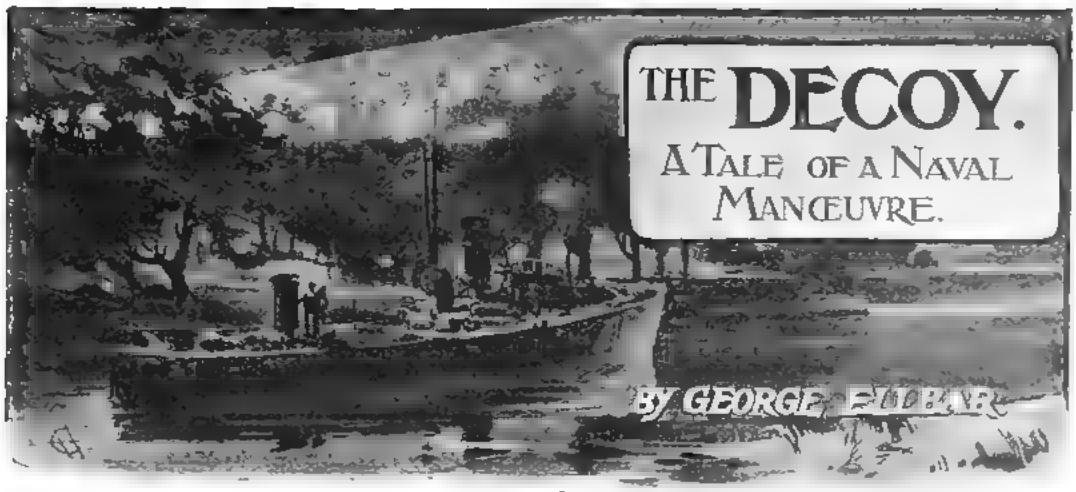
He receives some compensation, however, in the form of slightly longer holidays than fall to the lot of his friends, with the prospect of an increase to four or five weeks in proportion to his length of service. Each company has its own rules in regard to vacations. Some permit an employee to split up his time, others insist that he shall take all that is due to him at one and the same time, but whatever the arrangements, there is always a good deal of grumbling because a section have to take their holidays in early spring or late autumn. Two reasons may be cited to account for this. First, that the longer holidays allowed require a longer summer to be fitted into, and secondly, that the mid-year balance requires all the staff to be available during the last week in June, and the first week in July. A sensible suggestion has recently been made by a paper interested in banking, that the balances should be altered from June and December to March and September in order to overcome this difficulty.

Parents are always anxious that their sons should be engaged on healthy premises, and among gentlemanly companions. In a bank the premises are commodious, well lighted, ventilated, and drained, and the staffs are, without exception, composed of well-educated, gentlemanly fellows.

Another popular idea is that bank clerks are more poorly paid than their brethren in other offices. Be that as it may, it is certain that as juniors they are far better off than elsewhere. One young fellow that the writer has in mind has not yet reached his nineteenth birthday, and is in receipt of £60 a year; and it is equally certain that there is "room on top." For smart business men who understand the management and direction of others there are four figure salaries in plenty.

Finally, on attaining the age of sixty or sixty-five the faithful servant is pensioned off on sometimes as much as two-thirds of the salary he received previous to retirement, and is enabled to spend the closing years of his life in comfort, although he may not have been able to save a penny against "a rainy day."

ALFRED HOWSON.




*Illustrated by Geo. Hawley.*

ONE dirty night way back in the nineties, before the days of the thirty-knot destroyer, when water-tube boilers had not yet worked the heart out of perspiring engine-rooms, and turbines were unknown, a little, one-funnelled torpedo-boat was plunging unhappily in the wake of four other torpedo craft down the Irish Channel. On her apology for a bridge stood a drenched and shivering Sub., one eye on the steering-light of the next boat ahead, and the other on the tell-tale flames, roaring feet high out of the ancient funnel. Presently he leant over the engine-room voice-pipe for the twentieth time.

"Yoxall, Yoxall," pleadingly; "*can't* you work her up to fifteen? We're droppin' behind again."

Back, up the tube, came a voice, husky and despairing: "Very sorry, Sir, but we can't. If we give 'er any more she'll bust."

"It's no good, Joc," said Sub-Lieutenant Bertie Wilfrid to the sympathetic Petty Officer at his elbow. "Where's the trumpet?"

"Ahoy! Number 86, ahoy! Tell—Captain—Rolfe—we—can't—keep—up."

Silence for a time. Then, through the rain and spray, came a voice, high-pitched, intoning like a curate:

"Captain—says—he's—very—glad—and—he—don't—care—where—you—take—your—dashed—volcano—s'long—as—it's—away—from—his—nice—flo—tilla."

"Hear that, Jocelyn," called Wilfrid, his face flushing. "I've a good mind to take the beast at his word," he finished wearily.

Petty Officer Jocelyn grinned covertly, and cleared his throat:

"There's a nice leetle river not far away, too, Sir. Where we could 'ave a bit o' rest, Sir—ouch."

A green sea swept gaily across the narrow deck. Joceyln dropped nimbly down and crept forward to see that the lashings of the bow torpedo were all right. Up the voice-pipe came a mournful wail:

"Thrust bearin's gettin' overheated, Sir."

"That settles it," coughed Wilfrid. "Hang the manœuvres. I've had enough. All right, let her down to eight, Mr. Yoxall, please."

"And I hope he thinks we've foundered," he muttered viciously, glancing ahead, where the rest of the flotilla should be.

A quarter of an hour later No. 97 was working cautiously inshore, under the guidance of the Petty Officer. With easy confidence Jocelyn pointed out to the Sub-Lieutenant the leading lights of the river entrance. "That's the old Church," he said. "We keep 'er in a line with the buoy. That clump of lights to starboard is fishin'-boats. There's a nice leetle island up river, just astern of 'em, where we could lie snug for a week. Lord, I knows the place like a book, Sir. 'W'en I were cap'en's cox'n of the old *Deadlies*,* me an' the old man used to go shootin' there ev'ry other bloomin' day."

"The only thing about it," he went on, after a pause, "was the long pull from the ship. It's very shallow about here, Sir. I think we'd better go dead slow, now, Sir."

Wilfrid spoke down the tube, and the speed

* *Daedalus.*

of the little, cranky boat gradually fell off. Jocelyn, at the wheel, eyed keenly a line of foam showing up ahead. The Sub. glanced at his pilot apprehensively.

"Looks like a bar," he said. "Have we enough water?"

"It'll be all right, Sir," reassurred the Petty Officer, as they drifted down upon the tumbling, white water. For half a minute the waves surged angrily around the boat as she crept, foot by foot, over the bar.

"All right now, Sir," said Jocelyn at length. With a sigh of relief the Sub. started the engines. They steamed by the riding-lights of the fishing fleet, swaying slightly with the swell of the storm outside. Then, on the port bow, something loomed up darkly, and Wilfrid heard the sound of wind soughing through trees. Jocelyn put the helm hard over, and the boat swung across. "Stop her!" he cried, suddenly. A second after they jammed right behind the island, brushing amidst the over-hanging trees, and bringing down a copious shower of rain drops pattering on the deck.

"Wot O!" said the Petty Officer. "'Ere we are. As snug as a mouse in a 'ole."

Ten minutes after, Sub-Lieutenant Wilfrid, sitting on a narrow locker, in a sort of iron cell, was feeding on cold leg of mutton and ship's biscuit, as only a man does whose last square meal took place the day before yesterday. As he lugged out a time-worn briar, the mahogany face of Petty Officer Jocelyn appeared, at the top of the perpendicular steel ladder.

"Goin' to turn in, Sir? I'll look after the show."

"Thank you, Jocelyn," said the Sub., "think I will."

A little later Wilfrid lay full length on the locker, wrapped in a heavy duffle sleeping-suit, and oblivion.

It seemed but a minute or two before he awoke, to find Jocelyn grinning down at him, and the grip of the Petty Officer's heavy hand still on his shoulder. The shafts of light pouring into the little cabin showed that it was broad daylight.

"Mornin', Sir," said the Petty Officer. "You're lookin' fit, Sir."

"Rather," said Wilfrid, stretching luxuriously. "What's it like?"

"Come on deck, Sir," said the Petty Officer mysteriously. "I've got something to show you."

Wilfrid found the torpedo-boat nestling right behind a little wooded island that lay in the middle of the river estuary. Her stern pointed towards a good-sized fishing-village, rising, tier on tier, to the Church, their landmark of the previous night. Up stream, the river ran winding between tree-girt banks and rich, rolling grass lands. And all, the clear-running stream, the white, red-roofed cottages, the rain-washed trees shone and sparkled gaily in a sun-bathed July morning.

"Ha!" Wilfrid breathed a sigh of enjoyment. "This is something like. But what's Jocelyn after?"

The Petty Officer had stepped across to the island, and now stood under a stout tree, beckoning the Sub-Lieutenant to follow. Wilfrid found a rope dangling from a fork of the tree, and promptly swung himself up after his subordinate. The latter parted the leaves seawards, and Wilfrid, looking out, straightway forgot his pleasant impressions of a moment before, and bethought him again of naval manœuvres. For, out beyond the harbour bar, a mile and a half away, lay a black, one-funnelled gunboat.

"One, O, four, Blue Fleet," said Jocelyn laconically, answering the Sub.'s unspoken question.

The latter took up the telescope, slung handy on a near branch, and focussed it on the new comer. "Looks like the *Buster*, he said. "If so, I believe old 'Tenderfoot' is her boss man. Jove! I'd like to take him down a peg."

Lieutenant Horace Tenterden, re-named "Tenderfoot" on account of a peculiar sensitiveness to ridicule, had made things unreasonably warm for Wilfrid in a gun-room spree not so very long ago, and the Sub, had not forgotten.

"Any way, we're all right," put in the Petty Officer. "He can't see us 'ere, whoever 'e is."

"I don't know, Joc," said Wilfrid slowly, his eye to the glass. "I believe—yes, he's making his private signal."

The Sub-Lieutenant looked round, and a smile spread over his face as, without a word, he pointed upwards.

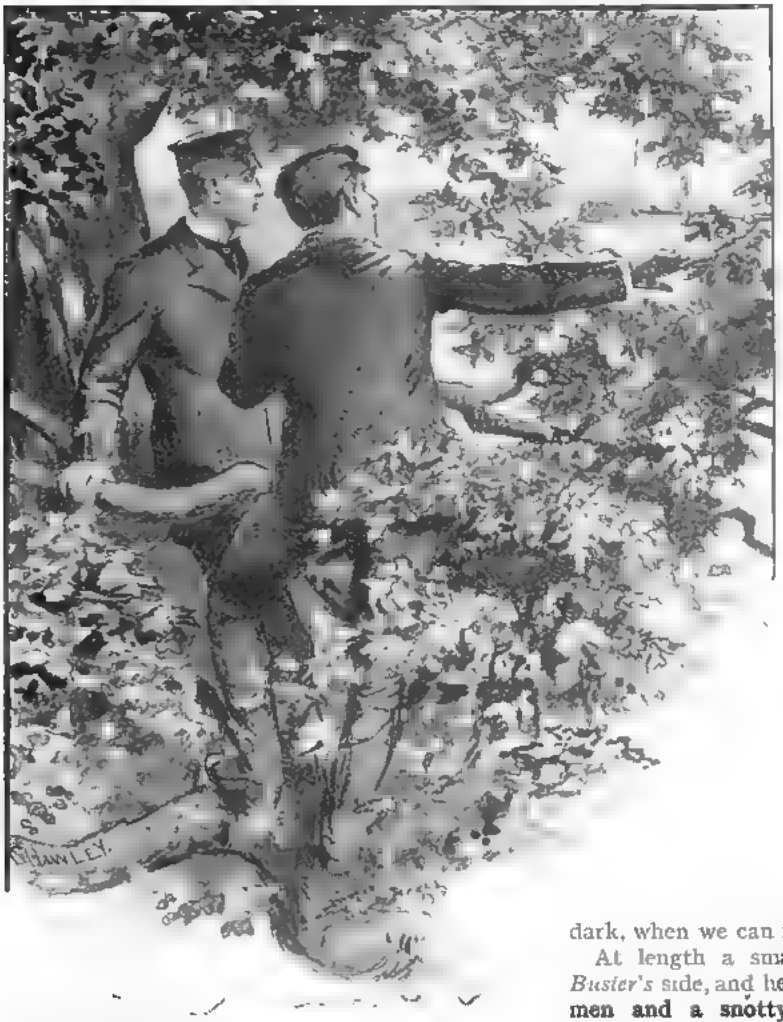
The Petty Officer followed the outstretched finger, and saw No. 97's mast-head tapering up, unmistakable, a yard or more above the trees. His jaw dropped suddenly.

"My word," he said, "what a bloomin' orstrich!"

"Can't be helped, Joc. We don't know their countersign, so the only thing's to sit tight. Hello!"

The gunboat was moving slowly.

"She's taking soundings. They can't get in, can they, at high water?"



BEYOND THE HARBOUR BAR, A MILE AND A HALF AWAY, LAY A BLACK, ONE-FUNNELLED GUNBOAT.

"Not unless they wants their bottom stove in, Sir."

Presently the gunboat stopped. A gun boomed out across the river entrance, and a string of little flags ran up to her stumpy mast-head. Wilfrid repeated the message as it came:

"Will—you—surrender—or—shall—we—blow—you—'Great Scott!' interjected the Sub-Lieutenant,—out—of—the—water?"

"What cheek! Why, even if we were not masked by the island, we are a quarter of a mile outside the action zone. I say, Jocelyn——" He gave the Petty Officer a few directions. The latter, grinning broadly, hurried down to the torpedo-boat.

In less than a minute the four letters "R A T S" were fluttering jauntily from No. 97's mast-head.

"I shall get hung for this," thought the Sub., watching the motionless gunboat. "Send a man up here, Joc." A look-out came up, and Wilfrid regained the torpedo-boat's deck. "I think you had better prepare to receive boarders—not that I think he'll send off boats, though. You see, he don't know who we are, and he'll be too afraid of making himself ridiculous. Still, in case he should, we'll get ready to crack a few heads before we're done. Now I'll have a dip, and some breakfast."

During the whole forenoon the men of the hidden torpedo-boat watched the ugly, squat gunboat; but the latter made no sign.

"It's just like old Tenderfoot to fool away a day like this," remarked Wilfrid. "I only hope he'll keep on till dark, when we can make a dash for it."

At length a small boat put off from the *Buster's* side, and headed for the quay. "Three men and a snotty: going to reconnoitre," exclaimed Wilfrid. He and the Petty Officer looked at one another, each with the same thought in his mind

"Carry on, Joc," said the Sub. "Take Peters, Larry, and Moxon, and don't kill anybody, if you can help it."

"All right, Sir," said Jocelyn, his keen eyes sparkling. "You leave it to me. Can I have the run of your kit, Sir?"

"Take anything you like, Joc."

Five minutes later a quaint little party pulled up stream behind the island, where they could not be seen from the gunboat. The coxswain, with a sou'wester pulled down over his broad features, wore a plain blue jersey, and had tucked his serge trousers into an old pair of sea boots. Of his crew, Larry sported a billycock, a size too small, and a check travelling ulster,

a foot too long. Peters, in a golf cap and tweed jacket, looked a cross between a prize fighter and a burglar; while Moxon's black beard looked blacker still beneath a bright straw hat, which completed his outfit of white duck.

The long afternoon wore away slowly, but the gunboat did not stir; and no indication came as to what was happening on shore. In the evening, however, a longshore boat was observed, making for the gunboat. Wilfrid identified her only passenger as the Midshipman in charge of the reconnoitring party. The youngster hurriedly scrambled on board. Wilfrid, with growing excitement, watched the hasty manning of a ship's boat, which then darted off for the quay.

"Gad!" he exclaimed, "I'll bet Jocelyn is at the bottom of this."

The sun went down amid gathering clouds, that promised a dark night. As darkness fell Wilfrid began to wonder what had become of Jocelyn and his party. Presently, however, his impatient ears caught the splash of oars. In a few minutes a boat could be made out darkly, coming slowly down river. As it drew nearer Wilfrid noticed that it was weighted down to within an inch of the water's edge. It drew alongside, and the burly form of Petty Officer Jocelyn rose carefully in the stern. The boat seemed to be full of men.

"Easy with the luggage," said the Petty Officer's well-known voice. Three helpless forms were hauled up to the torpedo-boat's deck. The last one had his mouth gagged with a handkerchief.

"'E would keep singin' 'imns," commented Jocelyn, "so we 'ad to tie 'im up."

"*Buster's* reconnoitring party?" interrogated Wilfrid.

"That's it, Sir. Put 'em under the turtle-back? Very good, Sir."

The three sprawling captives were haled below, and Jocelyn proceeded to make his report.

"EASY WITH THE LUGGAGE," SAID THE PETTY OFFICER'S WELL-KNOWN VOICE. THREE HELPLESS FORMS WERE HAULED UP TO THE TORPEDO-BOAT'S DECK.

"'Avin' made my plans previous," began the Petty Officer, "I lands and sends a flyin' squadron, consistin' of Larry an' Moxon, on a'ead to a little pub that I knows, up in the 'ills. Then me an' Peters goes on different courses to git touch of the enemy."

"I falls in with 'em first. Discreetly scoutin', I observes that the snotty is wery young, an' moreover that one of the matloes is an A.B. who I'd bin shipmates with in the *Conqueror*, five years ago. So I lays my plans accordin', and falls in with 'em permiscus like in the 'Igh Street."

"'Ullo, Stevens,' I says, 'Who'd a thought of seein' you 'ere?' He knows me at once and we fraternises, 'eavily.

"'But,' 'e says, 'I didn't know as 'ow you'd took your discharge.'

"'Yes,' I says, 'an' doin' well. Been a native 'ere for years. But wot are you a doin' in these 'ere parts?'

"'Oh,' 'e says, an' looks at the snotty.

"Well, the youngster looks me up an' down very scrutinisin', an' then pipes up very commandin':

"'My man,' 'e says, 'I understand you live 'ere. Do you know anything of a torpedo-boat lyin' up hereabouts?' And he pointed where 'e thought the island was.

"'Well, Sir,' I says, 'there is a boat a lyin' there, but I don't know who or what she is, 'avin' lost touch of things, through bein' out of the service so long. But,' I says, 'I can take you where you can get a good look at 'er yourself.'

"'That's just what I want,' he says, lookin' pleased. 'Lead on. I'll see you don't lose by it.' And 'e puts 'is 'and in 'is pocket, very swagger.

"So I takes 'em up and along, miles round, a lyin' all the way like a Maltese Josey; and we arrives at length at the 'Alf Moon, very 'ot an' dry. Well, of course, I proposes a drink, an', although the snotty looks down 'is nose, we goes in, where, of course, we meets Larry an' Moxon. Well, we 'as one, then another, an', to cut it short, in about an 'our's time, in spite of the little snotty's distressin' efforts, we was all as 'appy as a dog with a tin tail—'cept Moxon, who, accordin' to orders received, was doin' the stand off a bit."

"Well, when they was well on, Moxon takes the pore little snotty, who was 'alf weepin', aside an' offers to keep an eye on 'em while 'e goes for reinforces. The pore little snotty jumps at the idea, and sets off at the double to fetch 'elp."

"Yes," laughed Wilfrid, "I saw him cross the harbour. Go on."

"Well, in the meantime we all goes off, arm in arm, with a quartern of whisky, down in the wood, very jolly—Peters, of course, 'avin' pitched up long afore—an' in due course we arrives 'ere."

"And jolly good business, too, Jocelyn; but what is the gunboat's plan? Did you find out?"

"Of course, Sir. It's like this. At midnight they are comin' down in force to cut us out. That's all."

"Cut us out, eh? So that's their game." Wilfrid leant against the three pounder to think.

As he stood, turning ideas over in his mind, a bright beam of light swept to and fro, over the island and across the bay. Finally it swung full on the torpedo-boat's mast-head and rested there. Wilfrid stared at it for a few moments. Then he jumped up, his eyes shining.

"I think I've got it, Joc. Look here." He entered into a rapid explanation. At the end the Petty Officer nodded vehemently.

"Lord, Sir, we'll do it. I'll see about the dummy at once." And he hurried off.

The crew of No. 97 now became very busy. First a long spar was hauled out, and shaped and fitted until it was an exact replica of the torpedo-boat's mast-head. Then the moorings were so arranged that they could be cast off at a moment's notice. Next, while two men stood by the dummy mast-head on the island, the crew, armed with oars and boat-hooks and spare spars, stood by to pole the torpedo-boat off when signalled.

When all was ready, the dinghy, with two men on board, paddled off gently to the far side of the island, away from the clustered fishing-boats. Final preparations were made, and Jocelyn turned to his commander:

"All ready, Sir."

"Carry on," ordered Wilfrid. A lantern showed for a second on deck. Instant, away out in the harbour, a Very's coloured light lit up the dinghy and its crew.

The bait took. The *Buster's* search-light darted away from the torpedo-boat's mast-head towards the dinghy. No sooner had it gone than the real topmast came down with a run; while the dummy was lashed into position among the trees. At the same time the crew, frantically poling, sent the torpedo-boat out into the stream.

"Now's the critical time," whispered Wilfrid, as they drifted aimlessly down towards the fishing-boats. Steam had been got up before leaving the island, but the engines were not used for fear of discovery.

The search-light, quickly tired of the dinghy swept dangerously about the harbour for some seconds. Once it passed right over the torpedo-boat, and Wilfrid's heart stood in his mouth. Then it stopped again, on the dummy mast-head, with the four coloured flags impudently fluttering in the breeze. The Sub. gave a sigh of relief.

"I thought it was all up that time," he said. "Here comes the dinghy."

The small boat, which on the way had picked up the two men on the island, sheered alongside, and took in a line, waiting ready. Then it darted off again, ahead of the torpedo-boat.

"I hope they'll find the buoy all right," said Wilfrid.

"Sure to, Sir. Ah, there you are."

A pull came on the line, which tightened and ran out, carrying a mooring cable with it. In a few minutes No. 97 was straining at a buoy, just to seawards of the fishing-craft.

"Lucky the tide's runnin' out," said Wilfrid. "Now for our boarding party." He looked at his watch. It was half-past eleven.

The cutter was manned, leaving Jocelyn with barely half a dozen men to look after the torpedo-boat. The Sub. gave a few parting instructions to his lieutenant:

"When the search-light switches off, make for the gunboat. We shall go slowly, straight out to sea. Keep your eyes skinned, for we shan't show any lights. All clear?"

"Ay, ay, Sir."

The cutter pushed off, and stole cautiously seawards, until nearly abreast of the *Buster*. Then the men ceased rowing.

The minutes seemed like hours as Wilfrid sat waiting, his eyes strained on the unsuspecting gunboat. At last, to his joy, he thought he detected signs of movement on board. Then he fancied he saw a shadowy form steal out from the gunboat's quarter. Directly afterwards the faint clunk, clunk, of oars rattling in rowlocks removed all doubts.

Wilfrid waited a good five minutes. Then he gave the order to dip, and they edged in, as noiselessly as possible, until the gunboat lay nearly end on. Wilfrid listened for a moment. All was quiet. "Now," he whispered hoarsely.

The oars dipped with unchecked energy, and the cutter made boldly for the silent gunboat.

As they passed under her bows Wilfrid heard a voice call out in surprised tones:

"Why, Bill, 'ere's the cutter back again. What's up?"

The Sub. took no notice, but calmly steered his boat into the darkness of the *Buster's* quarter. They fell alongside. Ah, there was the ladder! With way still on, Wilfrid sprang for it.

As he gained the deck a man came towards him. Wilfrid neatly knocked his legs from under him, and stifled his sudden cry by sitting on his head. A moment later two of the cutter's crew had gagged him, and proceeded to bind him securely, hand and foot.

WILFRID NEATLY KNOCKED HIS LEGS FROM UNDER HIM, AND STIFLED HIS SUDDEN CRY BY SITTING ON HIS HEAD.

As Wilfrid had expected, not half a dozen men were on deck. The darkness and complete surprise of the attack made these an easy prey. With hardly a sound, every man was captured. It turned out that the officer of the watch, a Gunner, the man who might have given most trouble, was the man who had first approached Wilfrid on his reaching the gunboat's deck. "My luck's fairly in to-night," thought the Sub., as he gave a few hastily whispered orders to his men.

The search-light snapped out suddenly, and Wilfrid exultantly made his way aft to the Captain's cabin.

He pushed the door open. Lieutenant-Commander Tenterden was sitting writing, under a swinging lamp. He turned round at the Sub.'s entrance, and his eyes goggled large with amazement at the sight of his unexpected visitor.

"Captain Tenterden," said Wilfrid quietly, closing the door behind him, "I must trouble you for your sword. The *Buster* is a prize of the Admiral Commanding the Red Fleet."

For a moment Tenterden was absolutely speechless. Then he found his voice:

"What the—who the—?" he screamed in rapid crescendo. "I'll have you—Jones! Alton!"

"It's no good shouting," said Wilfrid coolly. "Your men are helpless. Listen."

He raised his finger. The thud of the gunboat's screw was plainly audible

"Why, she's under way!" shouted Tenterden. He jumped to his feet, and made for the door. "I'll have you hung for this," he cried fiercely as he rushed out.

On deck, the bare-headed, wild-eyed Commander of the *Buster* cast a frenzied glance around. His gunboat was steaming slowly out to sea. Astern, a cable's length away, was a low, black craft, following stealthily in their wake.

"That is my ship," said Wilfrid; "torpedo-boat number 97 of Red Fleet. And these are my men,"—he indicated with a sweep of his hand the four or five seamen who had gathered round. "You will observe others on the bridge, and forward. Nine of them, all told."

Lieutenant-Commander Tenterden glared round helplessly. Twice he made as if to speak, and checked himself. Then, with an oath, he hurried back to his cabin. Wilfrid promptly followed him.

"Captain Tenterden, I must again trouble you for your sword."

The *Buster's* commander caught up the scabbard and flung it with a crash on the table. Then, unable to contain himself longer, he poured out, unrestrainedly, the vials of his wrath.

He would have him court-martialled. He would have him cashiered. He would hound him out of the Navy. Insubordination! Contempt to superior officer! He would ruin him for ever and ever—the whelp! the insolent puppy! And so on and so forth—a wordy torrent of furious, red-hot rage.

Wilfrid waited until the gunboat's Commander stopped, exhausted. Then he began calmly:

"Court-martialled? Very well. But of course," he went on reflectively, fingering the sword straps, "the whole story of the night would have to come out. It would cause considerable amusement." Wilfrid smiled sweetly.

Lieutenant-Commander Tenterden started, and looked at Wilfrid sharply. The latter took no notice, but resumed in gentle tones:

"It will look well in the report. Lieutenant-Commander Tenterden, having sent off all his men to cut out a torpedo-boat that wasn't there, was captured, with his gunboat, in the easiest possible manner, by a single boat's crew from the poor little torpedo-boat. Meanwhile, the cutting-out party, unable to find their ship, telegraphed to the Admiral Commanding Blue Fleet. It will make Commander Tenterden look very foolish, don't you think? In fact, he will be the laughing-stock of the Navy. Eh?"

Tenterden, his face very white, did not look up. Wilfrid eyed his victim keenly.

"Of course," he said suddenly, "there is a way out of it."

Tenterden looked up sharply.

"The *Buster*," went on Wilfrid quietly, "could admit being torpedoed in the dark by an unseen torpedo-boat—on certain conditions."

There was silence for a few seconds. Then said Tenterden, huskily: "What conditions?"

"That your Midshipman hears no more of to-night's proceedings—and that you apologise for the very abusive language that you have just been using to me."

Tenterden jumped to his feet. "Never!"

"Very well," calmly said Wilfrid, moving towards the door. "That is an end of it."

The door was open. "Stop!" cried Tenterden thickly. Wilfrid came back.

"Then you will admit the claim?"

"Yes."

"And accept the conditions?"

"Yes."

"Go on——"

"I—I apologise," muttered the gunboat's Commander.

"Good. We will now torpedo you—just for the sake of appearances. And then," Wilfrid made a sweeping bow,—"we will relieve you of our company."

The Sub went briskly up on deck. "Stop her!" he cried. The telegraph rang, and a light was showed to the torpedo-boat astern. The gunboat slowed down.

Wilfrid waited. Suddenly there came a jarring blow, and the gunboat shivered throughout her length.

"Good again," said Wilfrid. "Come along, lads."

The cutter was manned. In a few minutes they had found the torpedo. The head was crushed in—a fair hit.

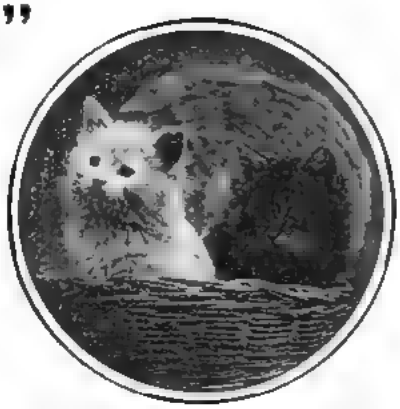
As they took it in tow Wilfrid gave an irresistible chuckle.

"Naval manœuvres are great," he said to himself. "Oh, very great."

They pulled round for the waiting torpedo-boat.

# "The Captain" Camera Corner.

"HUNGRY."
Photo. by G. H. Webber, Forest Gate.



"CARRIAGE FORWARD."
Photo. by Winifred Hughes, Ireland.

## PLATINUM PRINTING

*(continued).*

ASSUMING that we now have all the necessary outfit ready, we can get to work with our printing. First of all, dry the calcium tube thoroughly near a fire, line the inside with a coil of stout paper, and put the calcium chloride cake into its proper compartment. The lid is cut off the tin holding the platinum paper, the rough edges of the tin are carefully smoothed down with a knife, and the paper is transferred to the tube.

DON'T LET THE PAPER REMAIN IN ITS TIN,

which cannot be kept on tight when once opened; at least, not conveniently.

We now have to mix the chemicals. Into 14 oz. of hot water we put 2 oz. of *neutral* oxalate of potassium and ½ oz. phosphate of potassium, and shake the mixture till the crystals are dissolved. While it cools add ½ oz. *pure* hydrochloric acid (the yellow "commercial" acid is wont to stain the paper) to 30 oz. of water, and pour 10 oz. into each of three dishes, which will be known as Clearing Baths No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3. Bath No. 1 is stood nearest to the developing dish.

BACKINGS FOR THE PAPER

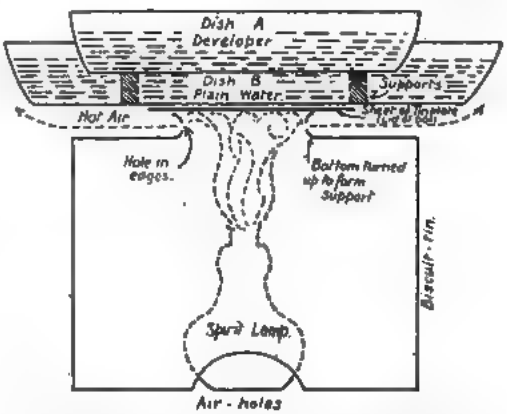
while in the printing frame are cheaply made out of "oiled boards" such as are used for letter-copying books. Two half-plate and two quarter-plate backings can be cut from a single board measuring 11½ by 9 inches. As already mentioned, special rubber pads are procurable from the dealers.

THE FRAME, BACKING, AND NEGATIVE

are now dried, and a piece of paper is put in place. Being more sensitive than P.O.P., platinum paper must be more carefully screened from the light. Make sure that your fingers are quite dry before you touch it; and don't blow on the print to separate it from the negative during examination in the frame.

It is wise to select a strong negative of quarter-plate size for first experiments, as the one quality renders correct timing of the print more easy, and the other minimises waste through miscalculation.

While the print is being made mix half of the stock developing solution, as we will term it, with an equal quantity of water, and raise its temperature to 65° Fahrenheit. The sketch appended shows a simple method of keeping




To keep developer at proper temperature: Cut a hole in the bottom of a tin biscuit box, and turn the end edges up to form support for big dish, in which is placed the developing-dish. A spirit-lamp is placed inside the box, and the box lid is stood on supports to protect the outer dish from the flames. Cut air-holes in the lid edges of the box.

the solution at an approximately constant heat.

USE A THERMOMETER

to test the heat of the solution. If below 65° it gives "grainy" prints.

The timing of the first print from a negative is a matter of judgment: but Mr. Horsley Hinton, in his capital little book on the process (Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1s.), describes a simple, though scientific, method of ensuring repetition of correct exposure when the latter has once been made. Cut out a number of strips of thin tissue paper and paste them one on the top of the other lengthways, so that each leaves a portion of that immediately below uncovered. We thus get a series of steps of thickness,—one, two, three, four, five, six, &c., folds of paper. These steps are numbered in order, and the bunch is pasted on a glass plate, and the whole placed, when dry, in a printing-frame in contact with a strip of printing-out silver paper, and exposed along with the frame containing the platinum paper.

As soon as the image is fairly strong on its yellow background, both frames are taken in, and the actinometer screened from the light.

The print must be introduced to the developer

VERY CAREFULLY,

so as to prevent the formation of air bubbles between paper and liquid. Take an edge in each hand and bend the print, with the plain side concave and uppermost. Dip one edge in the solution, and quickly lower the other hand, straightening out the print, and drawing it along through the solution. The air should thus be all driven out by the curved face of the print as it enters the solution. Development is almost instantaneous; therefore, turn the print over at once, and, with a finger-tip, brush off any bubble that may have been imprisoned. If this is done promptly, bubble-marks may be avoided.

AN OVER-EXPOSED PRINT

put into a normally heated bath can hardly be saved; but correctly exposed prints cannot be over-developed; while under-exposure is largely remedied—if not too pronounced—by heating the bath to 100°.

We will assume that we have made a "good shot" and obtained a nice black-and-white print with delicate grey half-tones. It is transferred straight from the developer to Clearing Bath No. 1, for five minutes; then to No. 2, for an equal period; and finally to No. 3, for another five minutes. We then soak it for a quarter of an hour in two or three changes of water, and it is ready for mounting.

Now let us look at the actinometer. We find that the paper under step No. 5 is just slightly tinted, while No. 6 is still white. We therefore write 5 on the negative, or on its envelope; and whenever we want another print, we know exactly when to remove it if we expose a fresh strip of P.O.P. simultaneously.

It is extremely important to

CLEAR THE PRINT THOROUGHLY.

The final acid bath should be perfectly colourless. If there is the slightest tinge of yellow the process demands another acid bath. When No. 3 becomes discoloured by a succession of prints, throw the contents of No. 1 away; transfer those of No. 2 to No. 1, and those of No. 3, to No. 2, and mix fresh solution for No. 3. I must also warn you against the other extreme,

LEAVING THE PRINT IN THE ACID TOO LONG,

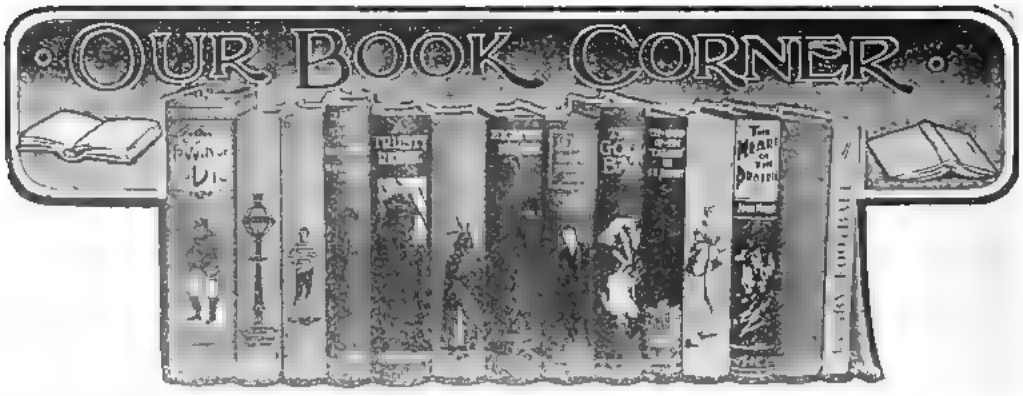
which is apt to rot the paper.

For the hot-bath (170°) process special papers are sold. If cold-bath paper is used in a very hot solution the darker parts of the print get a brown tint. The special paper, on the other hand, retains its black tones. As a general rule cold-bath papers are more suitable for the beginner. It should be borne in mind, however, that the colder the bath the stronger are the contrasts, and *vice versâ*. So that prints from a thin flat negative should be developed cold; and those from a very vigorous, "contrasty" negative in a much hotter solution.

Lack of space forbids reference to the treatment of Sepia paper; and to "local" development of the print by the glycerine process. I must, therefore, refer you to Mr Hinton's book, or to "Platinum Printing," No. 9, in the "Practical Photographer" series, published by Hodder and Stoughton, 1s. The Platinotype Co., by-the-bye, issue *gratis* a useful little booklet on the handling of their papers.

In conclusion, I strongly advise those readers who have hitherto fought shy of platinum paper to try it. The speed of printing, development, and finishing, and the pleasing and permanent results obtained will more than make up for any initial failures.

*All Correspondents should give their full names and addresses, as in some cases queries must be answered through the post.*




**Bluebell and the Sleepy King.** By Aubrey Hopwood and Seymour Hicks. (C. A. Pearson and Co. 5s.) A new fairy story, even though it be an old friend in a new dress, is always welcome at Christmas time, provided that it is bright and good, and our thanks are due to Mr. Aubrey Hopwood and his collaborateur for their dainty tale. The story is essentially up-to-date, and will probably be most appreciated by the child who knows something of London.

Bluebell is a young London flower-girl, who supports with her scanty earnings two little sisters. One Christmas Eve, when she is almost in despair for the wherewithal to purchase food for the next day, she meets a benevolent old gentleman who gives her half-a-sovereign. She returns home rejoicing in her good fortune, and falls asleep after reading a fairy story to her little sisters. She has a wonderful dream, in which the story she has been reading, and the events of the last few hours, are strangely intermingled.

Her pleasant adventures happily do not end with the dream, for the next day the benevolent old gentleman calls to see her, and eventually decides to adopt all three children, and takes them away to his beautiful house in Grosvenor Square, where they live, in the approved fashion, very happily ever after.

The story abounds in capital quips and jokes, and we feel sure that this story of a modern Cinderella will prove a most welcome and appropriate Christmas gift. Even without its pictures "Bluebell and the Sleepy King" would be delightful, but the charm of the book is greatly increased by Miss Maud Trelawny's numerous and clever illustrations.

**A Soldier of Japan.** By Captain F. S. Brereton. (Blackie and Sons. 5s.) The Russo-Japanese War has for the present ousted all other wars from the field of adventurous fiction. The hero of this book is an Englishman, brave and daring, who fights on the side of the Japanese, and his adventures should please all English boys, and for the matter of that all Japanese boys as well.

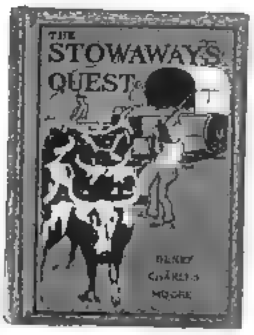
Fighting is dear to the heart of youth, and the ghastly carnage of war, which makes older people wonder whether man is, after all, so far above the brute beast, only shows its more romantic side to the school-boy. After all, this is as it should be. The boy who has no instinct for fighting—or for that matter no instinct of the brute in him—is apt to be an uncomfortable prig.

Captain Brereton has ample material at his command, and he does not use it sparingly. If he could only write as well as the late Mr. Henty he would be a worthy successor to the man whose name is esteemed by old and young alike. Unfortunately the literary merits of this book fall very far short of so high a standard. Many of the scenes, admirably conceived, are spoilt by careless sentences or weak descriptive writing.

**A Little Boy Lost.** By W. H. Hudson. (Duckworth and Co. 3s. 6d.) Charles Kingsley,

in "The Water Babies," has given us a notable story of a small boy who wanders away from his prosaic surroundings through a world of fairy fancies, and Mr. W. H. Hudson has based his delightful tale on the same idea, and, we venture to think, with equal success. Martin, "the little boy lost," wanders away from his home one day in pursuit of the mirage which ever evades him, but ever leads him on far over the plains towards the distant mountains. With his passionate devotion to all living creatures he is never lonely, never without companionship, and day after day he finds the world of nature more wonderful, more fascinating. He meets with savages who steal his clothes, and with the lady of the hills who loves him as a mother, and would have him with her always. Many wondrous sights she shows him to bind him to her side, but his adventurous spirit will not suffer him to stay, and the distant sea calls him on, till at last he finds himself upon the very shore and is borne away across the leaping billows.

The story is a charming blending of natural phenomena and fairy fancies told in language that is at once eloquent and effective. In one point alone is Mr. Hudson's story inferior to "The Water Babies." In the latter, Tom leaves a cruel master who has persistently ill-treated him, but Martin, who has no such excuse, deserts a devoted father and mother without any regard for their obvious pain at his loss, and with apparently none of those feelings of filial affection which we should properly expect from such a warm-hearted child. The book is, however, most attractive, and Mr. A. D. McCormick's dainty illustrations give it an additional charm.




**The Stowaway's Quest.** By Henry Charles Moore. (Pitman and Sons. 3s. 6d.) Sam Grace is a stowaway owing to force of circumstances. After landing at Cape Town he has various adventures (including that of falling in love) at Buluwayo and in Barotseland. One Charlie Vere, a bankrupt Englishman and a sportsman, who is trying to earn enough to discharge his debts, and Hawkins, the mate of the ship he stowed away in, are Sam's companions, and they meet with many adventures. Lions, elephants, and hippopotami are slain in great profusion, and there is a fight with native robbers on an island. Of course, the object of their quest is found at last, and then by good hap—for Sam is too young to marry—the South African War breaks out. All the interesting characters volunteer, and in three years' time Captain Vere is able to propose the health of "Lieutenant Samuel Grace, V.C." Need we add they are happy ever after?

The book does not call for an extensive criticism. There is plenty of incident and nothing harmful in any of the two hundred and fifty pages. And yet the author, who "has travelled extensively, and writes at first hand from personal knowledge," never succeeds in gripping the attention of the reader. The style is unreal, the humour forced, the story machine-made, and that is all that can be said about it.

**The Romance of Mining.** By Archibald Williams. (Pearson, 5s.) The author of this excellent volume is well known to readers of THE CAPTAIN, and if we remark that its compilation bears the mark of his customary thoroughness and conscientiousness, it will be understood that this is high praise. Mr. Williams commences with the earliest miners of the Stone Age and traces in their due order the many inventions which man has sought out through long ages in his delving after the hidden treasure of the earth. This is no dry-as-dust primer for the embryo mining engineer, but a fascinating record of all the "romance" which has attached to the miner and his work. It is a book most instructive, certainly: but also of singular fascination and interest. The subject is one which appeals vividly to the imagination, and the author is to be congratulated on the successful manner in which he has treated it.

**Jacyntha.** By Lizzie C. Reid. (Jarrold and Sons, 2s. 6d.) This story has certain merits which may commend it both to boys and girls. The plot is commonplace, and there are no

characters which excite either our hatred or admiration. But there is a certain quiet homely touch in the descriptions of a poverty-stricken household of the "re'l Oirish quality" that is distinctly worthy of commendation. The story does not convince us, but we venture to predict that the author will do something good in an entirely different class of fiction. She can write when she does not try to be dramatic. She is imbued with a love of nature, and can describe scenery. She is well acquainted with the spirit of the Irish race. All these are very valuable gifts, but they are misapplied in a work of this sort.

It is the misfortune of those who write books for young girls that they are bound by the iron traditions of the Early Victorian period. The tales must not only be without offence—which is as it should be—but they must supply a mental food consisting of "bread and butter" and "milk and water." And that is why girls prefer to read books written for boys.

The parts of this book which deal with the old servant and his wife are excellent, and we cannot help regarding them as the real hero and heroine of the story.

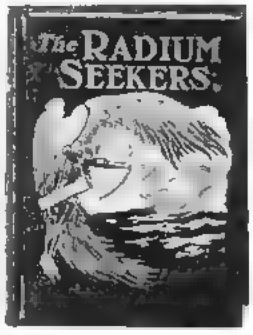
**Heroes of Iceland.** By Allen French. (D. Nutt, 5s.) Mr. Allen French did not write this book, and we doubt if any modern authors could have done so. But he has given it notes and a preface, and these make both useful and pleasant reading.

The story itself is the story of Burnt Njar, which is the great Icelandic Saga. It was conceived in an age when the telling of stories was of more importance than it is in these times. It breathes the spirit of this lonely island in the North Atlantic. It recalls the time when there were heroes and demigods, when men became great through the strength of their right arm and their skill with spear and sword.

The narrative suggests a combination of Homer and Hans Andersen, but it has one advantage over either of them. It is, making allowances for the exaggerated applause of heroes, a true story. The people were real people, who actually lived and did the deeds ascribed to them.

We can commend this book to all boys who admire bodily strength, and would like Homer if it were not unfortunately written in Greek.

**The Radium Seekers.** By Fenton Ash. (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 5s.) Mr. Fenton Ash, we fear, has under-estimated both the difficulties of the story-teller's art and the critical intelligence of the average boy. His preface informs us, with easy assurance, that he is "not without qualification for the vocation of writer of fiction for boys." It further expounds in general the views of Mr. Fenton Ash as to the proper matter and manner of that fiction, and adds other interesting information with an air of kindly tolerance for the "young reader." As who should blow upon a trumpet and cry, "Just you wait and see what *I* am going to do!"




It pains us to have to record our opinion that the author's "young reader" will be bored. It is not that the story lacks incident, or that Mr. Fenton Ash is devoid of imagination. On the contrary, he lets his fancy run riot. He endeavours verily to out-wells Wells at the latter's own game. But he overlooks the fact that mere extravagance won't do. The secret of the successful marvel-monger lies in his plausibility. The fascination of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells is due to the apparently logical sequence in which they make wonder follow wonder and miracle give birth to miracle. Mr. Fenton Ash has invented all sorts of portents—Brazen Serpents, Vampire Bats, Men Harpies and goodness knows what else—but these are such *obvious* inventions, with no rhyme or reason in their existence, that the "young reader" (who, we do verily believe, is no fool) will either shout with scornful laughter, or close the book with a vicious bang. The illustrations are worthy efforts to realise the author's creations: but they are too wildly absurd to arouse aught but merriment. Like a certain famous play, they are Enough to Make a Cat Laugh.

**The Boys of Badminster.** By Andrew Home. (W. and R. Chambers. 3*s.* 6*d.*) Mr. Andrew Home has a certain reputation as a writer of school stories, but we cannot altogether congratulate him on his latest production.

There are very few sensational incidents round which a school tale can be legitimately written, and the absolute impossibility of the central incident of "The Boys of Badminster" detracts very seriously from its merits. The ending of the story, too, is curiously abrupt, and the reader will without doubt feel considerable surprise, if not disappointment, on turning over the pages to find himself at the beginning of a new story instead of the middle of the one he has started upon.

In "A Row in the Sixth," Mr. Home is happier. The plot, if somewhat hackneyed, is, at any rate, possible, while the dialogue is bright, and the characters skilfully drawn.

In spite of defects both tales are interesting, and the style is vigorous and lucid.

**Two Boys in War Time.** By John Finnemore. (C. Arthur Pearson. 2*s.* 6*d.*) A story—and a good story—of the South African War. Ancient history by this time, it is true, but there is plenty of room for books of the type written by John Finnemore. The title—"Two Boys in War Time"—is somewhat misleading; for though there are two brothers, Dan and Jack March, who figure as the leading characters, at least two-thirds of the book are occupied with the adventures of the elder. There is no intricate plot: indeed, there is very little plot at all; but incidents, clearly imagined and described by a man who evidently knows the country, crowd fast upon each other. It is a series of brave deeds and hair-breadth escapes, and goes with a swing from start to finish. The difference between the author's methods and those of Henty is very marked; the latter tried in many of his tales to teach history by means of a story, while Mr. Finnemore's aim is the story pure and simple. Thus in *Two Boys* there is no detailed description of campaigns, no historical records of copious and wearisome statistics, no explanation of the causes which led to the war. Such names as Paardeberg, Kimberley, and Mafeking are not so much as mentioned on a single page! Only two strictly historical events are described—Roberts' entry into Pretoria (which thrills one even now), and the desperate fighting in defence of Wagon Hill. We get only a glimpse of the siege of Ladysmith, when the hero, bearing despatches, wins through the Boer lines into the beleaguered town; and for this very reason we think that the book is to be commended. Many authors could have written a history of the Boer War and entwined a readable story within the record. Mr. Finnemore has been content to give us a number of vivid pictures of a young South African's life—a youngster full of grit, hope, fear, and robust patriotism. All of the incidents are well conceived, and at least two have the merit of striking originality. The description of the Sergeant's ruse of disguising a dozen men as Lancers, and making them appear as several squadrons, and the escape of Dan from bloodhounds by means of a bicycle looted from Johannesburg, carry the reader along in most convincing fashion. The book is illustrated by Lawson Wood, and is already in a second edition. In short, a striking story of stirring times.

**The Luck of the Fairfaxes.** By Katharine Tynan. (Collins, 6*s.*) If boys were always as well served by their authors as their sisters have been by Miss Katharine Tynan in this charming little "story for girls," the critic's occupation would soon be gone. The authoress has a literary grace which most delicately adorns her work. The plot is of the simplest—merely the quiet, not very eventful chronicles of the fortunes of a delightful Irish family—but the story is invested with an air of gentle refinement which only the pen of a sympathetic woman of taste could give. The characterisation is admirable, and with such skill and truth are the various personalities portrayed—"sketched" is perhaps the more exact word—that the reader's interest in them is aroused almost unconsciously—surreptitiously, one might say. It is unfortunate that the illustrations are so poor. They would be better suited to a "fireside novelette" than to work of such quality as Miss Katharine Tynan has given us.

# COX'S COUGH-DROPS.

**By R. S. WARREN BELL,**

Author of "J. O. Jones," "The Duffer," &c. &c.

*ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON.*

## SYNOPSIS.

THIS story turns on the remarkable resemblance between Cox, a boy at Charlton Court Preparatory School, only son of the millionaire vendor of "Cox's Cough-Drops," and Robert, Earl of Yarningale, heir to the Marquis of Lapworth, another boy at the same school. Cox is a bully, and dominates Yarningale by a mixture of brutality, cunning, and superior will-power. Being booked for two hours' detention on a certain Saturday afternoon, Cox prevails on Yarningale to impersonate him at that ordeal, in order that he himself may go to a tennis-party at Charlton Grange, a country house that has been rented for a period by some London friends of his named Lomax. Cox is assuming that Mr. Skipjack, the senior assistant master, will be taking detention, but at the last moment Mr. Skipjack gets Mr. Hallam, one of his colleagues, to take detention for him, since he, as well as Cox, has been invited to the tennis-party at Charlton Grange. When Cox, all unconscious of this arrangement, arrives at Charlton Grange, he is filled with consternation on beholding Mr. Skipjack standing near the tennis-lawn. Without hesitation he decides on a bold line of action, and announces to Pattie Lomax, a girl of fourteen, that he is a boy called Yarningale who has come to explain his friend Cox's absence. When, a little later in the afternoon, Cox confesses to Pattie that he *is* Cox, Pattie promises faithfully to keep his secret. In order to avoid further encounters with Mr. Skipjack, Cox then returns to the school to find that Mr. Hallam has cut detention short and taken Yarningale (still masquerading as Cox) down to the Vicarage with him. Cox thereupon repairs to the village, smuggles himself into the Vicarage grounds, and, when a favourable opportunity occurs, changes places with Yarningale. Previously to this, Yarningale's identity has been discovered by Joan Henderson, the Vicar's younger daughter, who, like Pattie, vows not to say anything about the deception. Joan takes Yarningale to see her white rats, and explains that the "father rat" has been put in a cage by himself because he has displayed a tendency to devour the young ones. Joan is called away for a time, and it is at this juncture that Cox effects the exchange. Being ripe for mischief, Cox, who has overheard Joan's remarks, puts the "father rat" back into the cage containing his offspring, and the "mother rat" into her husband's cage. When Joan discovers the "father rat" attacking one of his children, in her fury she denounces "Cox" as an impostor, and declares that he is really a boy called Lord Yarningale. Cox having proved to the satisfaction of everybody that he *is* Cox, Joan is rebuked by her father and sent indoors.

## VII.

IT seemed to Mildred Henderson that some apology was due to Cox for her sister's conduct, and she made a remark to this effect to Mr. Hallam, when he rejoined her.

"Oh, don't trouble," said Hallam. "She was a little flurried, and it was quite natural that she should think that Cox had been playing tricks with her rats."

"Why was it quite natural?" demanded Mildred.

"He was the only person who could possibly have interfered with them," replied Hallam.

"But," said Mildred sharply, "it is surely an outrageous thing for a little girl like Joan to make a direct accusation of that sort? To begin with, it was so discourteous."

"Oh, I don't know," said Hallam; "girls don't waste much politeness on boys, and Cox is not a particularly sensitive fellow."

"But think!" cried Mildred. "Before everybody, Joan flatly accused Cox of putting the father rat in among the young ones. Now, if Cox did that, he deserves a good whipping, but he denied having done it——"

"Wait a minute," interrupted Hallam; "to the best of my knowledge Cox did not

deny having done it, but merely indicated unbounded astonishment when the accusation was made."

"Well," said Mildred, "if that doesn't constitute a denial, what does?"

"Ah," said Hallam, "you don't know Cox."

"Do you mean to say," asked Mildred, "that you think Cox really did change the rats?"

"I should say he is quite capable of having changed them," replied Hallam.

Mildred looked bewildered.

"I am sure we owe Cox an apology. Besides, Joan said he *wasn't* Cox! It is too bad to be flatly accused of pretending to be somebody else. That boy *is* Cox, you say?"

"Yes, I would swear to him," laughed Hallam. "But," he added (being perfectly certain in his own mind that Cox had changed the rats), "I do not think you need trouble to apologise to him. Instead of that you might get permission from your father for your little sister to come into the garden again. It is hard luck having to stay in the house on an evening like this."

"My little sister has been very naughty," snapped Mildred, "and I intend to apologise to Cox for her conduct."

"Oh, very well," said Hallam coldly, "as you please."

"I do please," said Mildred, tossing her head.

Looking distinctly annoyed, Hallam turned away, while Mildred proceeded in Cox's direction and sat down by his side.

"Oh, Cox," she said, "I have come to tell you how vexed I am that Joan should have behaved in that rude way."

Cox was on the point of replying, "Oh, that's all right," when it suddenly occurred to him that it would be as well if he were not too easily appeased. He therefore endeavoured to assume as martyred a look as possible and said, "Well, it *was* rather hard on a fellow, Miss Henderson."

"It was very naughty of her," cried Mildred. "I was really most astonished to hear her accuse you like that of being somebody else. She is such a truthful little girl as a rule: I have never known her to tell a fib before."

"Well," said Cox drily, "she has broken her duck now."

Mildred looked at him sharply. It occurred to her that this boy seemed particularly cool for his years. The average Charlton Court School boy was shy and reserved, and, as a rule, blushed even when he was asked to have some cake. This boy Cox looked as if he did not know what it was to blush at any time.

Miss Mildred had forgotten for the moment that Cox was the son of a gentleman who had made a fortune largely by reason of his enterprising and audacious methods of persuading the public that they wanted something that he had to sell. Again, there was an epoch in the elder Cox's life, before the tide of fortune began to flow in his direction, when he had faced five hundred angry shareholders with a calm and unruffled demeanour, and talked to them with such convincing subtlety that, by the time the meeting was over, the very men who had desired to tear him limb from limb were unanimous in giving him three cheers, and voting him a jolly good fellow.

Not quite knowing what to make of the lad, Mildred decided to turn the conversation. A short silence ensued while she tried to think of something to say, for she had always found it a matter of some difficulty to talk to Charlton Court boys, owing to the limited number of topics on which they appeared able to converse. Cricket and the holidays about seemed to use them up.

Wait, though! This boy had a wart. Now, she herself had recently been troubled with a wart, which had sadly marred the smooth beauty of her left hand, and to her joy this wart had yielded to the "charm" process employed by an old maiden lady, living in the village, called Miss Badger.

In addition to charming away warts, and predicting awful deaths for those of her neighbours whom she didn't like, Miss Badger dispensed ginger beer and lemonade in the summer.

"By the way," said Mildred to Cox, "you have a wart, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Cox shortly, for this manual blemish was the only thing that he was sensitive about—with the exception, of course, of the paternal cough-drop.

"Have you tried anything for it?"

"I have tried cutting it, and putting ink in the cut," said Cox. "A chap told me that would send it away in time."

"You mustn't do that," said Mildred, "because if it bleeds, another one will grow up near it. No, the best way to get rid of a wart is to have it *charmed* away."

"But that's all bunkum, isn't it?" said Cox.

"I can prove it isn't," said Mildred,

"because I have had one charmed away myself by an old woman in the village. She told me to squeeze some stuff out of a nettle on to the wart every night before I went to bed. She said that was all I would have to do, and that she would do the rest, and, sure enough, by the end of the week the wart had gone."

Cox gaped at her.

"How much did she charge?" he asked.

"I HAVE NEVER KNOWN JOAN TO TELL A FIB BEFORE," SAID MILDRED. "WELL," SAID COX DRILY, "SHE HAS BROKEN HER DUCK NOW."

"A shilling," said Mildred. "Quite cheap, you see."

Now, by great good luck, Cox remembered, Mrs. Henderson senior, in the fulness of her heart, and as a thank-offering for the soothing effects wrought on her uvula by Cox senior's world-famous remedy, had given him a shilling. That was the solitary coin in his pocket.

"I say," he said to Mildred, "I should like to go to that old woman and have my wart charmed. Where does she live?"

"She lives in a little house near the top of the village," said Mildred. "There are geraniums in the window, and by the door you will see a card on which is printed, 'Ginger beer sold here. Please walk in.' She has rheumatism, you see, and cannot get up quickly to open the door."

"I should like to go and see her now," said Cox, "if Hallam will give me leave."

"I will ask Mr. Hallam, if you like," suggested Mildred.

"Thanks awfully," said Cox.

Mildred therefore approached her admirer, who—such is the touchiness of young men when they are in love—was sulking on a garden seat near the tennis court.

"If you please, sir," she said, making a mock curtsey, "may Cox go and have his wart charmed? It won't take him very long. It is only a little way up the village."

"I think Cox had better stay where he is," replied Hallam curtly. "He has created enough fuss for one afternoon. He is bound to get into trouble if he goes off on an absurd errand of that kind."

"I think, sir," said Mildred, smiling in an exasperating way, "that you are in a horrid temper. I shall tell Cox he *may* go, so there!"

With a saucy nod to the enamoured young man, she tripped back to Cox.

"Yes, Cox, you *may* go," she said, "but you are to be as quick as you can."

Cox jumped up with alacrity, thanked her, and went off on the instant.

Now, for the enlightenment of the gentle reader, it must be explained that the neighbour for whom Miss Badger predicted the most frightful fate was a certain Mrs. Cayman, who lived on the same side of the street in a house very similar in appearance to Miss Badger's own. Sitting all day long in her

gloomy little edifice, Miss Badger used to think out malicious things to say about Mrs. Cayman. She hated Mrs. Cayman for more reasons than one. In the first place, Mrs. Cayman, having a little money of her own, did not find it necessary to dabble in commerce, as did Miss Badger. No unsightly placard made a white and black blot on the rose-covered exterior of her neat dwelling-place; no children pattered in with dirty boots; no perspiring cyclist ever intruded upon her privacy and dropped into a chair, mopping his face with a grimy handkerchief. You will think that it was unreasonably vindictive of Miss Badger to hate Mrs. Cayman on this account, but the whisper was that the two old ladies had once been girl friends, and that Mrs. Cayman had stolen away Miss Badger's sweetheart and married him. That, of course, was in the very dim and distant past. Since then fifty years had passed over their heads. For twenty-five years now Mrs. Cayman had been a widow, and one would have thought that such a long passage of time would have healed the wound in Miss Badger's feelings. But apparently it had not, for Miss Badger's favourite topic of conversation was the meanness and general sordidness of Mrs. Cayman's character.

Curiously enough, each of the old women had to use a crutch, and both were bent and gnarled, like aged apple-trees.

Now, it happened that, earlier on this very Saturday afternoon, a village urchin named Tom Plowers, who was never so happy as when annoying other people in some way or other, whilst passing Miss Badger's domicile noticed the legend displayed by her cottage door, to wit:

GINGER BEER SOLD HERE.

PLEASE WALK IN;

and maliciously conceived the idea of having a little fun with it. Taking the card off Miss Badger's nail, he carried it up the street until he came to a house (no other than Mrs. Cayman's) which had a nail in a similarly convenient position. On this nail he hung Miss Badger's card, and hastened on with a wicked chuckle.

During the next hour several cyclists pulled up at Mrs. Cayman's door, and, as requested, "walked in," but from the speedy way in which they withdrew it was evident that the greeting they had met with was not a friendly one. It was also evident that none of them referred to the card hanging outside, for it continued to hang there.

A fairly long interval of peace had elapsed, and Mrs. Cayman was hoping it would prove a permanent one, when a Charlton Court young gentleman opened her door. But the hostile nature of his reception caused him to retire as quickly as the cyclists had done. This young gentleman, had she only known it, was none other than the Earl of Yarningale, who, on his way back to the school, had thought it would be a good idea to quench his thirst with a cooling drink out of a stone bottle.

When another longish interval had elapsed, Cox, keeping a sharp look-out for a cottage of the kind described to him by Mildred Henderson, came at length to the residence of Mrs. Cayman, and, seeing the placard still dangling on its rusty nail, naturally concluded that this was the wart-charmer's abode.

At the best of times not blessed with gentle manners, Cox was this afternoon, thanks to all he had gone through, in a particularly boorish mood. Lifting the latch of the door, he gave the old oaken portal a kick with his stoutly soled tennis shoe, and strode into the cottage.

It so happened that Mrs. Cayman had made preparations to rid herself of further visitors in a speedy and effectual manner. She had a grandson called Jim—a tall and sturdy youth who came to her house every day to do such jobs as break her coal, chop her wood, and attend to her small patch of garden. Jim was sixteen, and a morose fellow. As it had occurred to Mrs. Cayman that her enemy Miss Badger was having some sort of a game with her, she hailed Jim out of the garden and told him he had better have his tea and sit with her a bit, as there seemed to be something going on that he could take part in.

Jim, collarless and coatless, was gulping down huge slabs of bread and lard when, sure enough, in came (as it seemed to the old lady) the very Charlton Court School boy who had come in before. Mrs. Cayman therefore decided to give him a reception he would remember. She did not dismiss him this time with a rasping croak to the effect that she did *not* sell ginger beer, but determined that she would get to the bottom of the matter. Meanwhile, Jim, the natural enemy of all school-boys, paused with a piece of bread and lard halfway to his cavernous mouth, and glowered at the trim figure in blazer, straw hat, and spotless flannels.

"Jim, mind the door," said Mrs. Cayman in a vindictive voice.

Leaving the tea-table with some reluctance, Jim interposed his bulky form between Cox and the door.

"Now, then," said Mrs. Cayman, glaring at the intruder, "I want an explanation from you before you go. This is the second time you've been. Who sent you here?"

"Yes," said Cox, glancing round at Jim, who, in turn, eyed him viciously.

"And told you I sold ginger beer?" demanded Mrs. Cayman, working her toothless gums about in an unpleasant manner.

"Yes; and also that you charmed warts away."

"*Me?* I charm warts? I am not a witch," snapped the old lady wrathfully.

MRS. CAYMAN ROSE FROM HER SEAT AND AIMED A BLOW AT COX WITH HER CRUTCH.

"*Second* time!" exclaimed Cox. "Don't talk rot. I've only just been told about ou."

"Who told you about me?" inquired the widow.

To her mystification and amazement, Cox promptly replied, "Miss Henderson."

"What? The Vicar's daughter?"

"You needn't be a witch to charm warts away," returned Cox, glancing at Jim again. He was not in the least bit of a funk, but he fancied he was going to have trouble with Jim. While he talked to the old lady, therefore, he was sizing Jim up.

"Do you mean to say that Miss Henderson told you I charmed warts?" demanded Mrs. Cayman unbelievingly.

"I have told you she did. Didn't you hear me?" said Cox. As a millionaire's son he strongly objected to being talked to in this way by an old village woman. "Come, now," he continued, "if you're going to charm my wart, just start about it. Here's

the shilling," and he slapped down the coin on the table.

The old lady saw her opportunity.

"Catch, Jim," she called out, snatching up the shilling and throwing it to her grandson. "I'll teach these lads to play games with an old woman."

Jim put out a brawny pair of hands, but Cox wasn't going to stand anything of this sort. He turned swiftly, and, as the coin fell to the ground, he and Jim ducked simultaneously, with the result that their heads crashed together. As Cox was wearing his hat, Jim's head got the worst of the encounter.

"You look out where you're comin'," said Jim, giving Cox a violent push.

By way of reply, Cox dashed at the village boy and clutched him by the throat. Locked in each other's embrace, the two swayed backwards and forwards. Seeing that she was in imminent danger of being hurled out of her chair, Mrs. Cayman rose from her seat and aimed a blow at Cox with her crutch. Its point caught Cox in the spine, eliciting a sharp cry from the Charltonian. Jim grinned savagely. Infuriated beyond measure, Cox disengaged one hand and hit the derisive villager a hearty one on the nose. Cox was a well-built fellow, and a little bit over the average weight for his age. Jim hadn't received a knock like that for many a day, and it filled him with a curious sense of allgoneness. Releasing Cox, he put his sleeve up to his nose, which had begun to bleed. Cox surveyed the cowering youth with flashing eyes. He was of a mind to continue the punishment, but before he could hit Jim again Mrs. Cayman's crutch descended heavily on his shoulder. Cox turned to ward off possible further blows, and, as he did so, Jim treacherously attacked him from the rear. Regardless of the crutch, Cox wheeled round and grappled with the garden boy. Struggling fiercely, they surged into the street, where Cox tripped his enemy up, gave him a final punch in the face, and left him howling amid a sea of dust.

Conceiving it possible that Jim might call a number of his friends to his aid and renew the combat, Cox, having secured his hat, hastened as quickly as possible down the village street in the direction of the Vicarage. He had reached the Vicarage, and actually had his fingers on the front-door handle, when a sound of wheels caused him to look round. To his amazement and disgust, he found himself gazing straight into the eyes of Pattie Lomax, who was driving a particular friend of hers from the Hall to the station in her governess car.

Cox raised his hat, but Pattie's only acknowledgment of his salute was an extremely frigid bow.

"By George!" said Cox, as he watched the trim little car bowl away down the street, "*she thinks I've come to see young Joan!* By George!—what rotten luck! She'll give me away now!"

## VIII.

Mr. Skipjack, as we have said, was a middle-aged and rather disappointed man, and when the Lomax family came to reside in the neighbourhood he had pricked up his ears on hearing that it contained several daughters who would have good marriage portions. Having become acquainted with the family, he decided to pay his addresses to the eldest Miss Lomax, for one reason, because hers was the age which approximated most nearly to his own; for another, because she would in all probability have the best *dot*; and for a third (and the strongest of the three), because it did not appear likely, judging by their attitude, that he would have the very slightest chance of winning either of her sisters. It came to be a matter of course, therefore, that, when Mr. Skipjack called at Charlton Hall, after paying his addresses to mamma, and exchanging a few words with papa, he took up a more or less permanent position by the side of the eldest Miss Lomax. Things went on thus until at last Mr. Skipjack concluded that the time was ripe for a proposal. So, on the afternoon in early June which has already occupied our attention in no slight degree, Mr. Skipjack inveigled the dear girl into the kitchen garden—she going with the utmost willingness—and, having found a nice secluded bower, proceeded to set forth his circumstances, his prospects, and his aspirations. Needless to say, the last-named included the possession of her fair hand.

"Miss Lomax—Isabel, may I say?" he proceeded, with a notable lack of originality which was perhaps natural under the circumstances, "I know that my avowal must come upon you with a suddenness that is a little disconcerting. You have doubtless only regarded me as a friend, but I desire to be something more—much more. Isabel, I know I am no longer a young man. I am

not a boy, like my colleague Hallam," he added, in a rather disparaging tone, "and on that very account I am not likely to speak to a woman before my mind is fully made up. What I say is the result of no passing fancy. I have studied you very carefully, Isabel, because this step I am asking you to take is a most serious one. It is not for a day, it is not for a week, it is not for a year, but," continued Mr. Skipjack, bending forward and taking the hand which lay within willing reach of his own, "it is——"

At that moment, who should appear in this secluded garden walk but the lady's little sister Pattie and a boy sporting the Charlton Court School colours. Miss Lomax blushed and looked very conscious. Mr. Skipjack glared at the boy, who raised his hat. Pattie, as she went by, indicated by a half-suppressed titter that she of the quartette was the only one who was thoroughly entertained by the *rencontre*. The two young people passed on and disappeared from view, and the two less young people remained seated on the rustic bench. Mr. Skipjack had released his hold of Miss Lomax's hand on the appearance of the juniors, and when the latter had gone he did not attempt to regain possession of it, although it must be admitted that Miss Lomax had allowed her hand to remain exactly where he had left it.

For quite two minutes neither of them spoke. At length Miss Lomax gave a slight cough, but, alas! Mr. Skipjack could not take up the thread of his discourse again. Anything he might say now would be flavourless and empty—a mere string of words. He had been approaching his peroration with such masterful ease that it was a thousand pities it should have been broken in upon by a chit of a girl and a boy whom he imagined was at that moment shut up in a hot school-room doing French translation.

Again Miss Lomax gave a slight cough. Under ordinary circumstances it would have meant nothing, but now its significance was obvious. But Mr. Skipjack evinced no desire to proceed. He was amazed by the daring of Cox in thus cutting detention and breaking bounds. He had already observed Cox on the tennis lawn, and had mentally determined to make it very hot indeed for the boy when he got back to the school. He imagined that Cox would, at least, have had the sense to keep out of his way during the afternoon, but what must the fellow do but intrude upon his privacy during one of the most sacred moments of his life! One, we say advisedly, for Mr. Skipjack, who was generally paying polite attentions to some single lady not entirely unencumbered with this world's goods, had already been rejected quite half a dozen times. Owing to this fact, any avowal of love which he now made possessed the advantage of having been well rehearsed. He was, if we may put it that way, word perfect in his part. He had said all these things before, and he recognised the possibility that he would say them all again, although he had come to regard Miss Lomax as a fairly certain quarry. Besides, she was the seventh lady he had approached with matrimonial intentions, and seven was a lucky number, he told himself.

"Fancy those two children wandering about here!" said Miss Lomax at length.

"That boy, too!" said Mr. Skipjack. "He has no right to be here at all."

"I believe mother asked him to come," said Isabel. "His people are friends of ours, you know."

"He was put down for detention this afternoon," returned Mr. Skipjack savagely.

"What a naughty boy!" cried Isabel.

"This will mean a very severe punishment," went on Mr. Skipjack. "This is most flagrant insubordination."

"Oh, please don't be too hard on him," said Miss Lomax—"to oblige me." She put her hand on his sleeve.

"The boy must be punished," returned Mr. Skipjack in a hard voice. "I would do a good deal to oblige *you*," he added, "but I cannot accede to *this* request. The boy must be punished, and severely."

Miss Lomax rose to her feet.

"I should have thought that, after what you were saying just now," said she, with more dignity than the senior master had suspected her of possessing, "you would be inclined to accede to such a trifling request as I have just named. I asked you to deal lightly with a boy who, after all, has only indulged in a boyish escapade. You have declined, and not at all politely, to oblige me. That is enough. Let us return to the lawn."

"I am sure, Miss Lomax—" began the master, who, now that it was too late, saw that he had made a mistake.

"I am not anxious to pursue the subject," she replied coldly, as she took her way down the shady path.

Mr. Skipjack could only follow lamely in her wake, grinding his teeth with impotent rage, and feeling a thousand times more infuriated with Cox than had previously been the case.

It may be imagined, therefore, that when Mr. Skipjack returned to the school in the cool of the evening his mood was not a pleasant one. During the remainder of the afternoon Miss Lomax had hardly deigned to notice him. The result of the attitude she had adopted may easily be surmised. From deeming her a lady who had fallen an easy victim to his charms, Mr. Skipjack was now inclined to the opinion that she was a woman who would take some winning after all. Now he came to think of it, although she was on the wrong side of thirty, Miss Lomax was tall and graceful, and not unintelligent. Mr. Skipjack felt uncomfortable. Suppose, after all this trouble, she flatly refused to have anything more to do with him!

While the boys had tea, the masters dined at the high table. Mr. Skipjack was far too much taken up with his own affairs to notice that his colleague Hallam looked far from cheerful. For some time both ate their dinner in silence: at length, however, Mr. Skipjack, having taken the edge off what was, in spite of the disappointing nature of his afternoon, an excellent appetite, turned to his junior.

"What are you going to do about Cox?" he asked Hallam.

"Do?" said Hallam, turning a questioning eye on Mr. Skipjack. "What do you mean?"

"Well, considering that you said you would take my detention for me, and considering that Cox cut detention, I presume you will take some step in the matter."

"But Cox did not cut detention," said Mr. Hallam. "He stayed in for quite an hour."

"And then?" inquired Mr. Skipjack.

"And then," continued Mr. Hallam, "I took it upon myself to let him off the remainder of his time."

The senior turned to his youthful colleague with an angry face.

"Look here, Hallam," he said, "this matter wants clearing up. Cox was on the Lomaxes' lawn when detention could not have been half an hour old. It was impossible for him to have put in an hour's detention."

"I think you must be wrong," replied Hallam coldly. "Cox stayed in an hour with me, and then I took him down to the Vicarage."

"Are you trying to screen the boy?" inquired Mr. Skipjack, angrily. "I tell you I saw Cox at the Lomaxes'! He could not be down at the Vicarage at the same time. Even you," added the senior master, with a sneer, "will acknowledge that to be a physical impossibility."

"The boy you saw at the Lomaxes'," said Mr. Hallam, helping himself to green peas, "must have been Yarningale. You know he resembles Cox very strikingly."

"Bosh!" returned Mr. Skipjack. "Stuff and nonsense! Allow me to know the boys in this school! Cox is a bigger, coarser-looking boy than Yarningale—altogether a rougher type. The boy I saw had all Cox's swagger and assurance."

"Did you speak to him?" asked Hallam.

"No."

"Did the Lomaxes tell you that the boy was Cox?"

"I only referred to him once during the afternoon," said Mr. Skipjack, in hard accents, "and then the person to whom I mentioned him did not say that he was not Cox."

"That seems a little ambiguous," retorted Hallam. "You are not certain, then, that the boy on the tennis lawn *was* Cox?"

"I am as certain of it as I am that I am I," snapped the senior master.

Hallam laughed grimly.

"I will prove to you," he said, "that this overwhelming certainty of yours is liable to go wrong. Yesterday a boy was caddying for me. Do you know who he was?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Skipjack, "it was Cox."

Hallam laughed again.

"No, that boy was Yarningale. I meant to have told you before."

"Are you sure?" demanded the senior master.

"Yes," replied Hallam, "and I will tell you another thing. When you missed your drive from the first tee, Yarningale, much to my surprise, laughed. I saw you noticed it. Now, you will admit, Skipjack, that you are not the best-tempered man in the world, and that later on, when Cox failed in his translation, you were not in a mood to let him down very lightly!"

"I never allow myself to be prejudiced by circumstances of that kind," was Mr. Skipjack's astounding declaration.

"Well," continued Hallam, "as I thought

it was rather hard on Cox that he should be made the scapegoat for another boy's lack of good manners, I let him off half of his detention, and, as I have said, took him down to the Vicarage with me."

"Why did you take him?"

"I generally take a boy with me. They like it, and young Joan Henderson is rather partial to boys' society."

"COX," SAID MR. SKIPJACK, "WE WISH YOU TO TELL US HOW YOU SPENT THE AFTERNOON."

"And so you pander to the tastes of silly school-girls, do you?" snarled Skipjack, who was burning to have a quarrel with somebody.

"Whatever I do," said Hallam warmly, "I shall not come for advice to you as a critic of behaviour and manners. Nor would I punish a boy with extra severity in school because he had annoyed me out of school," added the young master bitterly.

For his heart was very sore. Mildred Henderson, after deliberately flouting his authority on the Vicarage lawn, had devoted herself during the remainder of the time he was there to flirting with a young gentleman articled to the local solicitor.

So taken up was Mr. Skipjack with this conversation that he failed to notice that the boys had finished tea, and were anxious to be moving. Any school-boy in any hall, having finished tea, looks round for some occupation other than eating and drinking, and it generally happens that if boys are not promptly dismissed when a meal is over there will soon arise a hubbub that grows in intensity with every passing moment.

Observing that the attention of the masters at the top table—for Skipjack and Hallam were the only ones present, the others having gone out to dine—was taken up with their own conversation, the boys in time proceeded to indulge in the usual horseplay, and Mr. Skipjack was brought up with a start by a sudden silence which came quite as a shock in view of the hideous din the boys had previously been making. He looked up to find the headmaster standing in the doorway near the dais.

The headmaster came up to where his assistant masters were sitting.

"As the boys appear to have finished tea," was his rather chilly remark to Mr. Skipjack, "I think they might go."

Mr. Skipjack jumped up and snapped out grace with a venom which gave the words he uttered anything but a flavour of thanksgiving. Then the boys streamed out to enjoy a brief spell of leisure before preparation began.

"Oh, Skipjack," proceeded the head-

master, "I have received a complaint from a woman in the village named Mrs. Cayman that some boy belonging to this school went into her cottage twice this afternoon and behaved in an annoying manner. Perhaps you will be good enough to make inquiries on the subject?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Skipjack, and the headmaster retired.

Mr. Skipjack was still on duty. He had got off for the afternoon, it is true, by requesting Mr. Hallam to take detention, and getting another colleague to look after the boys in the cricket-field, but he had to take preparation, and he strode into the big schoolroom looking very cross indeed.

Preparation over, the boys had milk and cake in the hall, and then Mr. Skipjack read prayers in a highly unprayerful tone.

When the boys streamed off to bed, Mr. Skipjack retired to the common-room for a smoke preparatory to taking his duty prowl round the dormitories. Hallam, with his legs dangling over the side of a basket-chair, was reading the cricket scores in an evening paper, for even in out-of-the-way Charlton the evening air was made hideous by the cries of two little boys and one little *girl* who hawked the local evening rag round the village.

"Now, Hallam," said Mr. Skipjack, as he filled the bowl of a huge pipe with tobacco, "I will just prove to you that Cox *was* at the Lomaxes' this afternoon."

"I don't see how you can prove an impossibility," said Hallam. "I have already told you that Cox was with me the whole afternoon."

"We will interrogate both Cox and Yarningale on the point," said Mr. Skipjack, pulling fiercely at his pipe. "Cox is a pretty hardy liar, I have no doubt, but I am sure that Yarningale is not. We shall at least be able to obtain the truth from *him*."

"Quite so," said Hallam. "Yarningale's account of his movements this afternoon will quite settle the matter. Neither of them will be expecting us, and so they won't be able to prepare any story, although, for my part, I really think that they have no story to prepare, and that you are labouring entirely under a curious misapprehension."

Cox had just got into bed when, to his consternation, he saw the two masters enter his dormitory.

"Now for it!" was his guilty thought. "There's going to be a row."

Arrived at his bed, they halted.

"Cox," said Mr. Skipjack, "we wish you to tell us how you spent the afternoon."

Cox replied without hesitation.

"I went into detention at three, sir, and soon after four o'clock Mr. Hallam told me to change, and I went down to the Vicarage with him."

"Is that all you did?" asked Mr. Skipjack sternly.

Cox hesitated. Had they found out about the rats, or had the old woman in the village been kicking up a row? It might be either, but he thought it the more likely that it was the old woman in the village. Well, that wasn't very serious, for, after all, he had gone there under the direction of Miss Henderson, and she had brought him permission from Mr. Hallam.

"I had a bit of a shindy in a cottage," he said briefly.

"Oh," said Mr. Skipjack. "Then you are the boy who called twice on a Mrs. Cayman and subjected her to much unnecessary annoyance?"

"No, sir, I called once," said Cox, "and she began the row," he added.

"Did you give him leave to go to a cottage in the village?" asked Skipjack, turning to Hallam.

The young master couldn't possibly explain that Cox's visit to Mrs. Cayman's cottage was the outcome of Mildred Henderson's saucy disregard of his authority. He knew that, if he said a word about it, Mr. Skipjack would make a malevolent joke of the matter that would last at least a month. So, though unwillingly, he inclined his head.

"Very good. We will go into that later," said Mr. Skipjack. "I simply wished to hear from you, Cox, how you spent the afternoon. Did you, by the way, see anything of Yarningale during the afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," said Cox promptly. "I asked him to go to Charlton Court and say why I couldn't be there."

Hallam cast a triumphant glance at his senior.

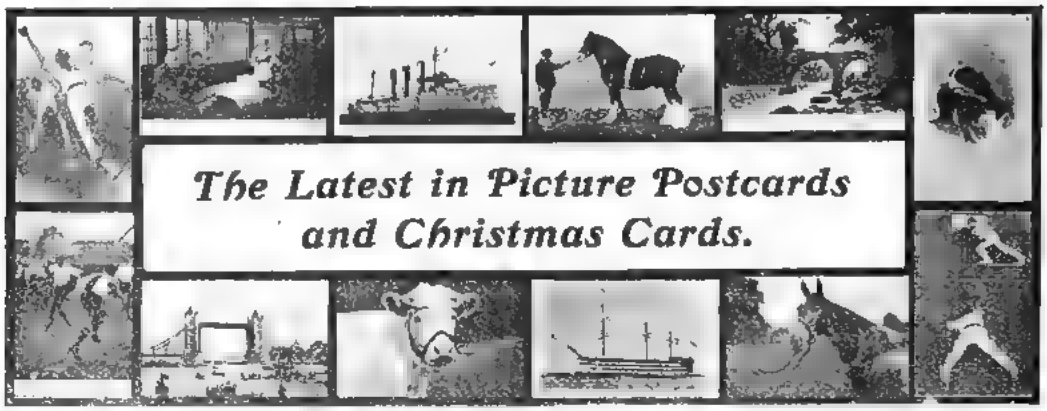
Mr. Skipjack nodded.

"Thank you. That is all I want to know," he said briefly, and turned away.

The two masters walked in silence to the door of the dormitory, and passed out on to the landing.

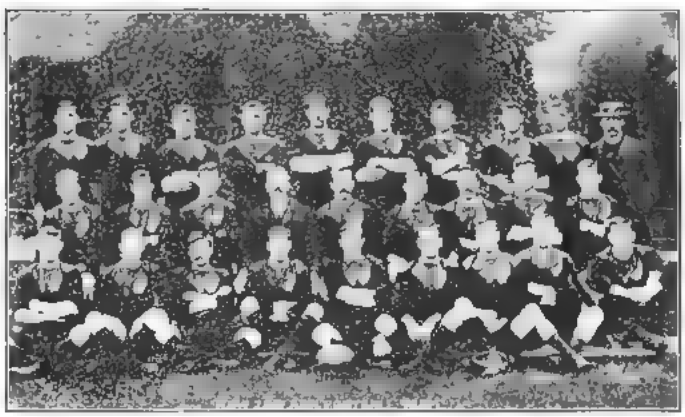
"Now," said Mr. Skipjack, "for Yarningale."

*(To be continued.)*



# *The Latest in Picture Postcards and Christmas Cards.*

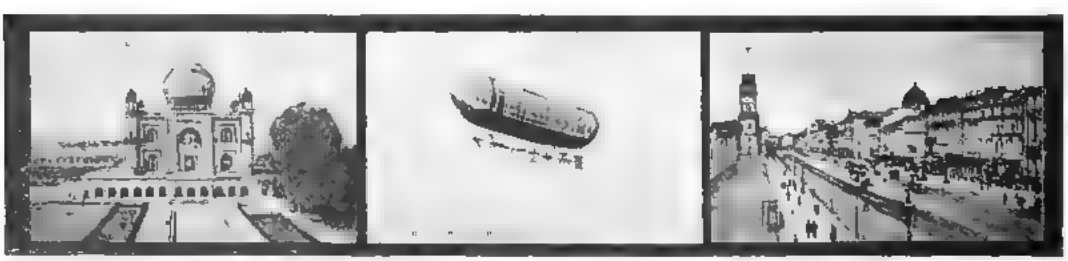
ONE thing is essential in the proper cult of the picture postcard—up-to-dateness. Amongst the latest cards which have been sent to the offices of THE CAPTAIN, pride of place must be given to an admirably reproduced photograph, published indeed: for at the time of writing (recollect that THE CAPTAIN goes to press some time ahead of its date of publication) the athletic talk of the moment is of nothing but the wonderful play of the "All-Blacks" and their triumphant, irresistible progress.



THE NEW ZEALAND FOOTBALLERS.
By the Rapid Photo. Co.

by the Rapid Photo. Company, of the New Zealand Footballers. This is "the latest."

From the stock of the Collector's Publishing Company, we reproduce three interesting cards. The picture of the Barton Airship in mid-air over the Alexandra Palace is a capital snapshot. Contrast it with the paper fire-balloon in which, as is narrated elsewhere in the present number, that famous aeronaut, the late Rev. J. M. Bacon, made his first ascent. The other two pictures both possess a topical interest. All eyes are upon the Royal tour of the Prince of Wales in glowing India, and the photograph of the Mausoleum of Safdar Jang, at Delhi, is typical of a number of characteristic Indian scenes which the Collector's Publishing Company issues. *Apropos* of the unrest in Russia, the picture of the Nevski Prospect in St. Peters-

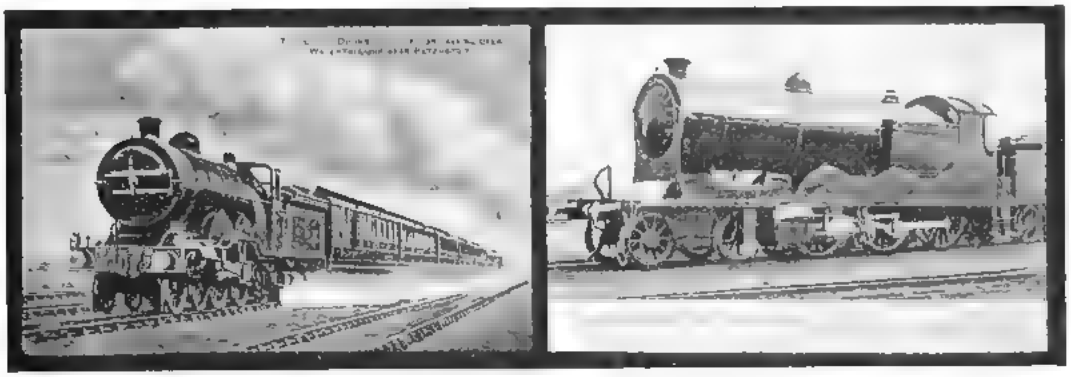


THE MAUSOLEUM OF SAFDAR JANG, DELHI.

THE BARTON AIRSHIP.

THE NEVSKI PROSPECT, ST. PETERSBURG

By the Collector's Publishing Co.



G.N.R. DINING-CAR EXPRESS, NEAR PETERBOROUGH. NEW FOUR-CYLINDER EXPRESS, L.S.W.R.

By the Locomotive Publishing Co.

burg—"the finest street in Europe"—is of peculiar interest.

The "Iron Horse" is a subject of never-failing popularity, and from the recent series submitted to us by the Locomotive Publishing Company we have selected two cards for illustration. One of them shows the Great Northern Railway Dining-Car Express passing over water troughs near Peterborough, and the other the new 4-cylinder express built for the London and South Western Railway.

As we go to press we have received from Messrs. Misch and Co. a number of Christmas Calendars, which are certainly distinguished for remarkable ingenuity in design. Many of them are so contrived as to contain movable—almost mechanical—figures, and the skill with which the calendar date-blocks are introduced is extremely clever. The designs embrace a large variety of subjects, and the calendars make suitable gifts for recipients of all ages. Of Christmas *cards* pure and simple we have received from the same publishers a very large number, most of them reproduced exquisitely in colour. The speciality of the firm seems to be floral designs, and many of these are very tasteful. Their picture postcards are, in some respects, the best we have seen lately. This is especially true of the series entitled "The World's Galleries," in which are reproduced masterpieces from the best European collections. The colour-printing is almost perfect, and the cards are of exceptional thickness, and well finished with a gilt bevelled edge. We illustrate postcards of Millet's *Gleaners*, and Morland's *Inside of a Stable*, which are typical of the series, though, of course, we cannot do justice to the exquisite colouring

Messrs. Houghtons, Ltd., send us some specimen Christmas cards which will admirably suit the amateur photographer. The designs are simple, effective, and in good taste. Most of the cards are two, three, or four fold, with a space for the amateur's print to be slipped in behind the cut-out opening on the second or fourth leaf. This method of sending greeting cards is one that is peculiarly attractive, on account of its personal note.

J. F. MILLET'S "THE GLEANERS." GEO. MORLAND'S "INSIDE OF A STABLE."

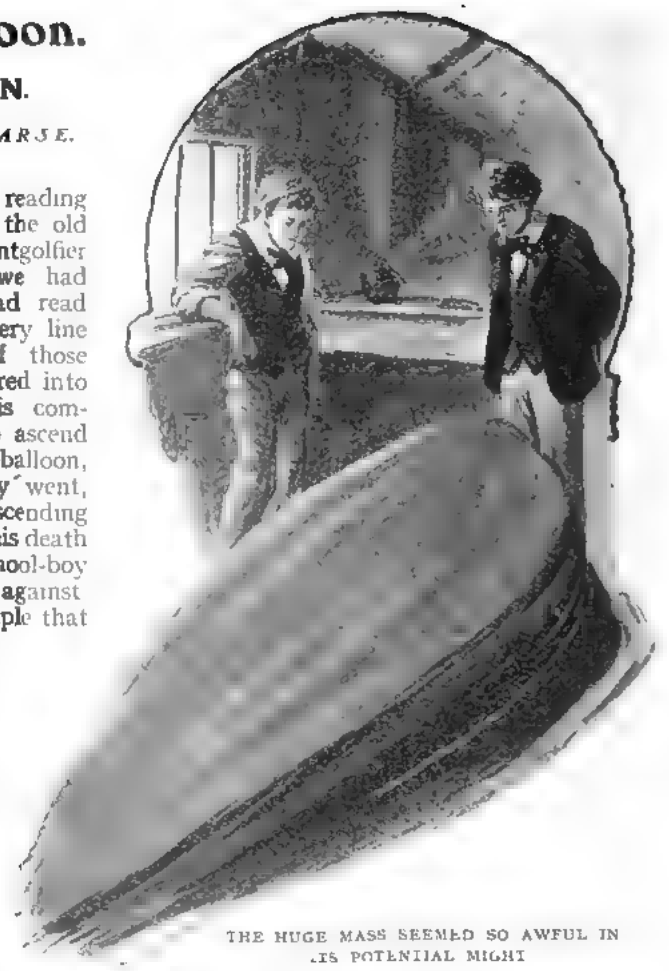
By Messrs. Misch and Co.

# Aloft in a Fire-Balloon.

**BY THE REV. J. M. BACON.**

*ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED PEARSE.*

IT all came about through our reading that fascinating account in the old chronicles of the first or Montgolfier balloon. But to say that we had read is not enough. We had read and re-read till we knew every line by heart, and the spirit of those grand old ventures had entered into our souls. The Marquess and his companion were the first of mankind to ascend into the skies. Theirs was a big fire-balloon, and they stoked the fire as they went, coming home in the end unhurt, and ascending again and yet again, till the hero met his death by a misadventure which a mere school-boy would have known how to guard against. And the grand experiment was so simple that mere school-boys might do the same—at any rate, boys who enjoyed the run of a workshop, and had learned every trick of manual cunning which their father, an all-round mechanic, had leisure to impart. So at least the pair of us thought. Half in play and half in earnest we began to make calculations, and plan an outrageously ambitious experiment.



THE HUGE MASS SEEMED SO AWFUL IN ITS POTENTIAL MIGHT

We were encouraged by a famous old book, long since out of print, written by an American aeronaut, John Wise, a self-made and self-taught balloonist, whose experiments and experiences, lucidly but quaintly told, suggested boundless possibilities. The simple tale of his successes, and still more of his failures, supplied a series of practical hints which began with the most fundamental. He had had to think out every step, and I can reproduce the words in which, after the fashion of the genuine working man, he states the main principle that guides every practical balloonist. "The great advantage," he says, "in enlarging balloons arises from the fact that their powers increase faster than their surfaces. When you double the diameter of one you require four times as much material to make it, but you get eight times as much capacity, and consequently eight times as much power."

Quaint wording certainly, yet it goes to the root of the matter. Forthwith we set to work upon the construction of a Montgolfier balloon. Nothing was wanted save tissue paper, a pair of scissors, and some paste. Twelve gores we found a suitable number. We took a willow leaf as model of the general shape of each gore, and let the breadth of the middle or widest part be one-sixth of the whole length. Then, laying one gore upon another so as to allow the edge of the lower one to overlap a quarter of an inch all the way up, we pasted that quarter inch, bent it over, and pressed it. Two gores were thus united.

Continuing until all twelve were joined together, and folding them like a fan as we proceeded, we came at last to the delicate task of making the final joining. But with two pairs of hands we found, after some futile attempts, that this was not difficult. Lifting the top gore and bending the next ten inner gores back upon themselves, we drew the top gore over,

so as to make it lie on the bottom one, again allowing a quarter of an inch to over-lap. This being pasted and bent back as before, the trick was done. The tops, of course, had to be strengthened and covered with an extra circular patch, while the open mouth at the bottom was wired so as to hold the wad of cotton-wool containing the methylated spirit. By the time we had made half a dozen, and burnt two or three of them, we were expert at balloon making. From small efforts, we proceeded inevitably, as proper enthusiasts, to greater.

Having succeeded splendidly with a giant of seven feet, and failed signally with a mammoth of ten feet simply from lack of proper heating, we sat down to think out the next step.

"The fact is, Jack," said my brother, "we want another sort of fuel. In the old days, they used dry firewood or straw. We must do the same."

So we went to work with a biscuit box, punching holes in it to make it resemble a brazier, and for some days there were evil smells in the back yard. The worst of all, I remember, arose from dried fir-cones rendered extra inflammable by a patent process. There was no paraffin in those days, but there was good honest tar, of which we had good store for painting the fowl-house. After various experiments, we worked out a philosophical calculation of which we were mightily proud. It certainly possessed the merit of originality. Getting a small tin kettle with a measured quantity of water in it we noted the length of time it took to boil, when heated with methylated spirit. Again we noted how long that kettle took to boil when placed near the burning cones, and lastly, we found accurately the quantity of spirit burned in the first case, and the weight of cones in the second, and from these data we reckoned out what would have to be the scale of the balloon which would carry a heater which burned wood fuel.

First, the heater itself had to be found, but it chanced that this was ready to hand. A new form of stove had come into popular use that winter (it was the Crimean winter), consisting simply of a large oval body made of sheet iron in which wood logs could be burned whole. It answered well, except that it soon wore out, as such things always do if ill attended to, and there was one that had perished, and been consigned to an out-house. It had a hole fairly—or rather unfairly—burned in one side from sheer overheating, but the lid of our biscuit box being riveted over the hole, it was fit enough for our purpose.

It was light, for a stove, but iron is always heavy, and when charged with fuel the thing was rather lumpy. Clearly, as in the olden days, our craft would have to be a real monster, but even so the question was one of manual labour only. The old Montgolfiers had been made simply of paper strengthened with some slight material. The odds and ends of a paper-hanger's store could be had in quantity almost for the asking, and the soiled muslins from last summer's stock at the draper's was not a serious matter; neither was the little cordage required, for which ordinary tarred twine served perfectly. Besides we were not altogether without funds, for as farmers in a small way, we owned fowls and rabbits with which we did business on favourable terms with our parents.

Now commenced an impromptu manufacture which can hardly have been surpassed even during the days of the siege of Paris, when the disused railway stations were converted into workshops, and any handy material which the mercers had in stock was made to serve as the fabric of some seventy extemporaneous balloons. Our workshop was a large empty loft, wholly given up to our use, where we suffered no intrusion. Some hundred hands were employed in Paris over the stitching of each balloon, which had to be completed in less than a week; but in our case the paste-pot and brush took the place of needle and thread, and we could by this mode unite two gores in less time than a score of tailors could complete one entire seam. Thus in about a fortnight our balloon began to take definite shape. To our imaginations it resembled a new ship laid down in the stocks, already showing the outline and proportions of the future vessel.

We were intensely proud of our work, but at times pride gave way to a feeling of dread, which I have often since thought must have been partly due to presentiment. Were we repeating the story of Frankenstein, and was the creature we were bringing into existence destined to be a monster that would bring us to destruction? The huge mass seemed so awful in its potential might, as it lay on the floor, inert and flat, yet in graceful curves, fold on fold. It suggested a monstrous being that might well pass out of control when the day of the final unfolding arrived.

Not for a moment did we doubt the practical principles on which we had proceeded, or the power of our air-ship to ride the skies

A LONG UPRIGHT SHAFT OF LIGHT LOOMED UP CLOSE AGAINST US.

when once fairly and successfully launched therein. But this launching was the chief matter which exercised our minds, while the last pastings were drying. In this particular, however, as in all other details, our *vade mecum*, the text-book of old John Wise, came to our aid. A couple of scaffold poles, planted in the ground, carrying an overhead line from which the top of the balloon could be suspended during inflation, seemed to be all the accessories required. The mode of procedure was to draw the mouth of the balloon over the stove, and then light a gentle fire, sufficient just to expand the lower folds of the fabric out of harm's way. After that the fire was to be gradually increased until the balloon, becoming more and more inflated, began to raise itself in the air. At this point the overhead rope could be withdrawn, and the ascent would then proceed as in the case of a gas inflation, only with far greater simplicity, for the stove would be already in the car and in position. A makeshift car, be it said, which answered well for the nonce, was found in the shape of a large crate.

But when the time of actual trial arrived, a new anxiety took possession of us. The experiment was so big, so far beyond anything that we boys had ordinarily embarked on, that our seniors would be almost sure to interfere, or, at least, to take the matter in charge, thereby robbing us of the honour and glory which should be our own. Yet we wanted other assistants badly. Two were not enough to cope with so large a machine, though in a complete absence of wind four or five pairs of hands might suffice. Eli, groom and gardener, was a staunch friend of ours, and always to be relied upon in any enterprise, from a rat hunt to a run after the hounds. Eli must certainly be pressed into the service, as also Harry the garden boy, whom we had always looked upon as our own particular fag by right. We had also one other ally whom we could generally reckon upon. This was an old pensioner called Royal—so named by the villagers because he had served his time in the Royal Navy—an odd man (very odd at times) about the place, who would always, with a prospect of beer in view, serve as a mercenary. He could be relied on at least to act under orders.

It ended in our calling our little party together for a council of war, which we carried out with considerable diplomacy. Winter nights were already come, and it was a common thing with us, after working hours were over, to induce Royal to sit and smoke for an hour over the coach-house fire, for he could tell sea yarns with much spirit and power of invention. Eli on these occasions would join the sitting,

on the tacit understanding that baccy was provided.

Our party being thus assembled, chance aided us in rousing due zeal. Coxwell had lately written a racy pamphlet describing an imaginary conversation between an aeronaut and a general, and showing how balloons might be used in war. One of us read the pamphlet aloud that night, and the notion proved so far attractive that it was agreed we should all play at being at war, and inflate, if possible, the big balloon. It was then to be let up with a dummy engineer after dark to reconnoitre an imaginary enemy's position. It was necessary, however, to wait for a suitable night.

The right night soon came: a night in early November. The wind, which had been light all day, died out entirely towards evening, leaving the air warm and muggy. Orders went forth that the party was to assemble in the fowl yard at 4.30, by which time we three boys had got out the balloon, raised the poles, and placed the car and stove in position. All being mustered, the operation proved marvellously expeditious, showing the real value of this mode of inflation in actual war. I think about twenty minutes were spent in drawing and hoisting the huge fabric into place. Then a handful of fircones was ignited. These at once expanded the air, and made a clear space round the stove, thus allowing the fire to be augmented. In ten minutes the crown of the balloon was struggling with the overhead rope, allowing it to be withdrawn, and in twenty-five minutes from the start the balloon was taut in every seam, and standing stiffly as high as the surrounding firs.

By this time all of us, young and old, were wild with excitement, and it being now the work-people's tea hour, it was agreed that we brothers should be left in charge, while the rest hurried home and returned in half an hour. Like true aeronauts we took our seats in the car, and proceeded to nurse the fire. Apparently we were in perfect security. The lift of the craft had been scientifically taken by mooring the crate to a wooden cattle trough, in which water was poured till the balloon was on the point of rising. Fifteen buckets of water adjusted an exact balance. When five more bucketfuls, therefore, had been poured in, and our own weight added, it was felt that all was safe, provided no wind sprung up. But no wind was to be feared, and we sat at ease while we tended the fire carefully, talking big of our success, and rocking deliciously, as our grand airship swung gently in the slight air.

Presently the swinging motion ceased, and shortly afterwards we noticed with curiosity that the embers which fell from the stove no longer hissed in the water below. My brother, looking over the side, gave a sudden shout.

"Good heavens, Jack, we are off."

It was true. Somehow the bung must have come out of the trough, and the water having leaked away, we had been lifted off the ground, and were mounting rapidly.

It was nearly dark, so that our eyes, dazzled by the stove fire, could at first see nothing of the earth. But suddenly a long upright shaft of light loomed up close against us. The unaccountable, almost unearthly, apparition intensified the real terror of the moment. Then we recognised it as the church spire, reflecting our stove light, and shining white against the black night sky. We could almost have laid hold of the weather cock as we sloped upward over it, and into the pitchy darkness above.

We pulled ourselves together at once. We were not terrified at our situation. We had read too much of ballooning ventures to regard ourselves in real peril. Anxious, however, we were, anxious on behalf of those left below, anxious to come well out of it all and exonerate ourselves of blame. And it was the very necessity for action that steadied us. We must needs stay up till the heat of the balloon died down, and it were better to let it die gradually. So we started reducing the fire, little by little, looking abroad keenly to learn our course and situation.

All sight of earth had faded out entirely, save for single lights here and there, faint and far. But after a few minutes a distant broad glare appeared in the sky. This we knew must be from the town five miles off, and as it grew broader and more displayed we knew we must still be rising. Above us the vast cavern of the balloon showed dimly—solemn, misty, and mysterious. Our hands and faces shone ruddy in the light of our expiring fire. But the silence was what impressed us most. We were sailing through an unknown ocean where was no sight, nor sound, nor consciousness of motion.

This and much else remains in my mind as a more or less confused memory. It is hard to sift the impressions that for half an hour whirled like a mill stream through my young brain. Subsequently I learned that though our voyage seemed a little age, it really lasted but one half hour.

After a while the distant glare thinned out again, showing that we were descending.

SPEECHLESS, WE WATCHED THE FLAMES EXPIRE.

My brother, by right of seniority, assumed the lead and bade me follow directions, but the matter was taken out of his hands. We were really close to earth without knowing it. There was a rustle and whipping of twigs about us, then the snapping of boughs, a jerk or two, and all was still. We had settled softly in a wood in the next parish, and alighted unhurt. But alas! for our poor craft. The stove capsized, setting fire to the paper, and in two minutes our noble balloon was reduced to ashes. Speechless, we watched the flames expire. Then we vowed mutual silence, and turned to make our way home.

* * * * *

The wreckage was discovered after a week by the keeper, who gave information that gipsies had been camping in his master's preserves. One or two villagers had seen "summut in the sky," and questioned further thought it was "a commut, or such as they." But the matter never got beyond that. Before the end of the winter Eli went off to the diggings. Royal still remained, and might have proved a traitor, but that his fame as a story-teller prevented any yarn of his from gaining credence.

Harry? Well, it is possible you may chance some day to meet a retired policeman in a certain district of the shires who can tell this story as well as I can. You are welcome to pump him.

## THE MIDDY AND HIS PRAYERS.

"HAVE you ever heard tell, by the way, of Captain Byng's midshipman? I forget his name, but he started his first night aboard ship by kneeling down and saying his prayers, as his mother had taught him, and the crowd of his fellow-midshipmen found it against the custom of the service, and gave him the strap for it. This, however, raised him up a champion in one of the taller lads, who protested that their conduct was tyrannous: 'And,' said he very generously, 'to-morrow night I, too, propose to say my prayers. If any one objects, he may fight me.' Thus, being a handy lad with his fists, he established the right of religious liberty on board. By-and-bye one or two of the better disposed midshipmen followed his example. By degrees the custom spread along the lower deck, where the dispute had happened in full view of the whole ship's company, seamen and mariners, and by the time she reached her port of Halifax she hadn't a man on board (outside the ward-room) but said his prayers regularly. At Halifax, Captain Byng took aboard out of hospital another small midshipman, who on his first night no sooner climbed into his hammock than the entire mess bundled him out of it. 'We would have you to know, young man,' said they, 'that private devotion is the rule on board our ship. It's down on your knees this minute or you get the strap.'"—From *Sir John Constantine*, by A. T. Quiller-Couch.

# NATURALISTS' CORNER.

*Conducted by* EDWARD STEP, F.L.S.

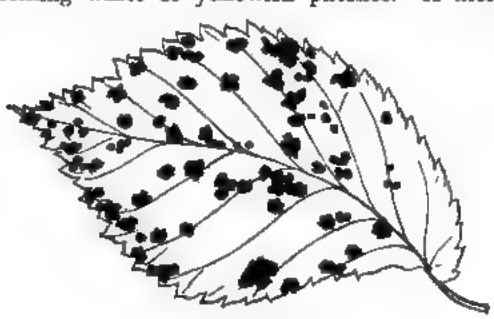
**Names of Plants.**—P. Marsh (Melton Mowbray) sends me a small flower-head of Chrysanthemum, without leaf or stalk, and asks for the name of the variety. I cannot undertake the formidable task of identifying florists' varieties of flowers, especially of such a plant as *Chrysanthemum sinense*, whose garden varieties run into so many hundreds. Life is too short for any one but a Chrysanthemum specialist to attempt it, and even he, I suspect, would demand a little more material than can be packed into a match-box.—R. E. Porter (Henfield) sends me leaves of a Poplar of which he desires to know the name; but here again the material is insufficient. I believe they are leaves of the Cotton-wood or Necklace Poplar (*Populus monilifera*), a North American species, but would not like to speak positively without seeing a twig or two. If it is the species named, the young branches are angular or winged, and the female catkins very long and drooping. In reply to your inquiry for a volume more advanced than my "Wayside and Woodland Trees," and dealing with the subject more from the forester's point of view, you cannot do better than get one of John Nisbet's volumes, such as "British Forest Trees," or Brown's "Planter." For the coniferous-trees you should get Veitch's "Manual of the Coniferæ."—Edwina Magee (Enniskillen) sends a budget of leaves, &c., which she wishes to have named. She has not numbered the specimens, so I am not sure that she will be able to associate them with my names. The one she thinks is a Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), because of its "mast" or nuts, in spite of its deeply toothed leaves, is really the cut-leaved variety (var. *heterophylla*) of the Common Beech. Your Snowberry (*Symphoricarpus racemosus*) was badly smashed in the post, but there was enough of the berry left for identification. It is a North American shrub commonly grown in this country. The solitary leaf of what your gardener calls Gorgonelle I cannot identify, not knowing any plant by that name. The material you send is insufficient for identification. When it blossoms, send me a flower with leaf and part of stem, and I will try to make it out. The tree "that grows by the river," is Sallow (*Salix caprea*). What you call Elder is another riverside tree, the Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) with the remains of last spring's fruit, and next year's undeveloped catkins. The one you call Bay appears to be the Portugal Laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*).

**Salamanders and Frogs.**—W. J. Mitchell (Stoke Newington) says he cannot distinguish the males from the females of his Salamanders and Frogs. He does not mention the particular species, but I presume he refers to the common natives. The male frog is smaller and of more slender proportions than the female, but in the spring he may be known by a warty enlargement of the "thumbs" of his fore-limbs. In the Salamanders or Newts the female is broader, more rounded than the male, which in the breeding season develops a crest or frill along his back and tail.

**Rabbits.**—H. Perrett (North Nibley) complains that his pure-bred Himalayans are very thin, though they have a good meal of crushed oats and barley-meal, with varied green food, every day. This is probably the cause. The one meal should be changed for three, or at least two meals a day, and the food should be more varied. Carrots, turnips, clover-hay, should be added to their dietary, and the evening meal should include boiled rice or a thick porridge made from Indian meal, and given warm. I do not know of a book giving good instructions for keeping rabbits, mice, and pigeons for a shilling or two; but if you consult Upcott Gill's catalogue you will find you can get separate books dealing with one or other of these subjects, at 1s. each.

**Purchase of Dog.**—G. Bourne (Tooting), wishes to buy a dog, preferably a fox-terrier, fairly cheap, and as he does not care to purchase from advertisers in periodicals he asks me to recommend him a seller. I regret that I cannot undertake such a responsibility.

**Diseased Leaf.**—G. H. H. (Tiverton) sends me an Elm-leaf liberally sprinkled with blackish raised blotches, and asks several questions. I have had a drawing made of his leaf that other readers may understand. The blotches are on the upper side of the leaf and have a broken surface. Although mostly noticed when the leaf has turned yellow and fallen from the tree, the patches are formed whilst the leaf is still green. They are then dark green themselves, but afterwards turn to blackish-brown. They are caused by a fungus, the Elm-leaf Blister (*Taphrina ulmi*), and the upper surface splits open to discharge the spores which spread the disease to other leaves. Its attacks appear to be confined to the leaves and twigs, and therefore it has no appreciable effect on the timber. I cannot answer the question why the fungus only appears on the upper side of the leaf, except by saying it is the nature of the fungus to attack the upper surface only. Some leaf-fungi appear only on the lower surface of their hosts. A closely allied species (*Taphrina aurea*) causes golden-yellow blisters on various species of Poplar, and here the fungus is in evidence on both sides of the leaf, concave below and convex above. Yet another (*Taphrina sad beckii*) will be found on the leaf of Alder, chiefly below but sometimes above, forming white or yellowish patches. A more



ELM-LEAF BLISTER.
Natural size.

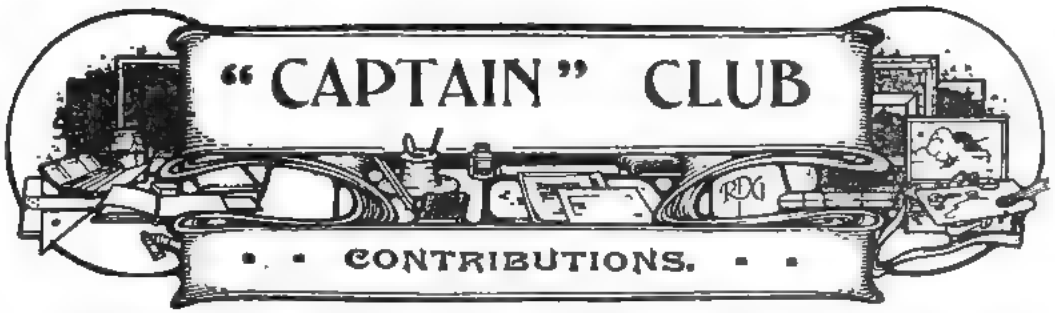
familiar example of such attacks is found on the leaf of the Sycamore and Maple. This, which is known as the Sycamore Blotch (*Rhytisma acerinum*) is very conspicuous on account of the large size of the blotches, at first yellow, then becoming deep black. Many other trees have their leaves disfigured by similar fungi, and any of my readers who possess a student's microscope would find in them some interesting and often very beautiful objects, which cannot be appreciated by the unassisted eye.

**Cheap Lantern Slides.**—Messrs. Butcher and Sons, of Farringdon Avenue, E.C., have sent me some specimen sets of their new Natural History Slides, which altogether cover many departments of Animal Life. The sets submitted are of Birds, Butterflies, and Moths. Readers who have lanterns, but not being photographers, cannot make their own slides, will be glad to know of these. They are of the regulation size, printed in bright transparent colours, and show the creatures in their natural surroundings. A printed list accompanies each set, giving brief facts concerning the species depicted upon which any lad of intelligence could string an interesting little lecture to his friends. Each set contains eight slides and is sold at the low price of 2*s*. The insects include on each slide the caterpillar, the perfect insect and the food plant. I imagine that many readers of this Corner will be glad to avail themselves of this brilliant series.

**Cage Birds.**—"Songster" (Wandsworth) asks "if Goldfinches and Bullfinches breed in captivity, and if so please add a word as to what I am to do about it." This is rather quaint. Both birds *can* be bred in confinement, but not readily; indeed it is often said by successful breeders of other birds to be almost impossible with the Bullfinch. What "Songster" is "to do about it" is to get suitable birds, make them comfortable, and await results. But he must not be very sanguine. His query suggests that he is a beginner, and therefore he can hardly rely upon a measure of success that has been denied to many a breeder of great experience.—E. Gordon-Smith (Cheltenham) has a very healthy and tame Canary, which used to sing beautifully, but since moulting in the past summer has quite lost its voice. Can anything be done for it, or given to it to improve matters? As it appears to be in perfect health it is not advisable to treat it as out of health. The loss of the singing power is a frequent accompaniment of moulting, only sometimes the song is resumed soon after the moulting has been completed. In this case it looks as though you will have to wait patiently until the spring, when I expect the singing will be resumed in full force. You may, perhaps, shorten the time by introducing a hen bird into the same room.

INQUIRIES have also been received from E. R. Dutton (Weston-super-Mare), R. H. Benson (Newcastle), E. Milley (Kettering), and "Pestered" (Harrow). Replies to these correspondents will appear as soon as limited space will allow—next month, if possible.

CORRECTION.—In the December number, the picture on page 291 should have been labelled "Pupa of Privet Hawk-moth," not "Prince," as printed.




THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club with literary and artistic aspirations. Articles, poems, &c., should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "Captain Club" pages. Each prize-winner is requested to select a book.

### *Lancashire Lads and Football.*

LANCASHIRE was brought into some prominence in the football and sporting world last season, when two Lancashire clubs worked their way into the final for the English Cup. It is amusing to see the pale-faced and lean but hardy Lancashire lads, as soon as they come out of the mill or workshop, start kicking at some old tin can, or, if they can get it, a ball of cotton waste. This they pass, head, and kick about with amazing skill. It is their daily training for the match at the week end. As a rule they are very clever with the ball, plucky, and quick on their feet; but the great drawback is their physique, which is spoiled through close confinement in the mills, and the early age at which they commence to work.

Most lads in Lancashire seem to start playing football almost before they can walk, for in the season you will be met by little urchins, asking if you can spare a copper towards their football club. By the way, nearly every street seems to possess a club, if not two, or three. However, when the boys are old enough, they generally commence playing for some Sunday-school league club. Most Sunday-schools form a football team, and this seems to be a great attraction, for nearly all Sunday the boys are discussing the points of the match played on the previous Saturday.

From these beginnings, if qualified, they climb the ladder into first-class football, and this, I am glad to say, occurs pretty often.

Some of the leading players of to-day have come from the land of the red rose. There is more than one Lancashire lad playing in the South, and playing well, too. For these lads play the game, and do their utmost to win—for a Lancashireman is a sportsman to his finger- and toe-tips!

FRED ASHWORTH.

### *Cycling Downstairs*

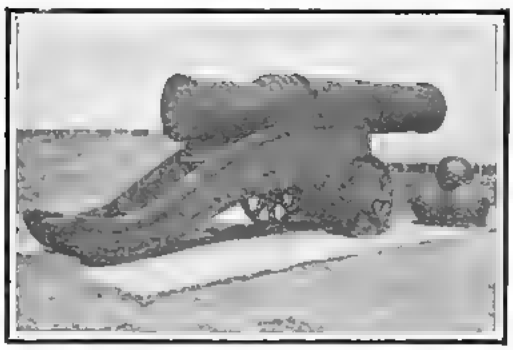
THE photograph reproduced on this page was taken at Christchurch, New Zealand, and shows what the confident cyclist, whose hardihood is equal to his skill, can accomplish upon a machine. The rider is mounted upon a "Swift" road-racer, and is seen

CYCLING DOWNSTAIRS.
Photo. by X.Y.Z.

descending the steps of the Christchurch railway station at full speed—one had almost said "breakneck" speed, but the successful termination of the daring feat renders the epithet unsuitable. X.Y.Z.

### "Mons Meg."

ONE of the sights of the Castle in Edinburgh is the old cannon known as "Mons Meg." Made out of iron bars by "Brawny Kim," the smith of Mollance (pronounced Mons), in Galloway, about the year 1476, it was first used at the siege of Dumbarton Castle, in 1489. Afterwards it



"MONS MEG."
One of the most famous objects in "Auld Reekie."
Photo. Johnson.

was taken to Edinburgh, and while there was captured by Oliver Cromwell, in 1650. In his report as to its capture, Cromwell calls it "that iron murderer, Meg." Thirty-two years afterwards (in 1682) the gun burst while firing a salute in honour of a visit to the city of the then Duke of York. In 1754 it was removed to the Tower of London, but, at the request of Sir Walter Scott, it was restored to Edinburgh in 1829, amid scenes of great rejoicing. Ten horses hauled it from its landing-place at Leith to its resting-place in Edinburgh Castle, where it was deposited on a small platform in front of St. Margaret's Chapel, the oldest building in the city. The gun-carriage bears an inscription setting forth the main facts of its history as detailed above.

J. H. PARSONAGE.

### Hockey in Canada.

HOCKEY, at least out here, is *the* winter sport. Of course, we play on skates,—and generally on a covered-in sheet of ice. The skates used are called "hockies," and are screwed to the boot, so that each player has to have a separate pair of boots to play in.

The players are six in number, viz.: Goal point (who plays about thirty feet in front of goal), cover point (who plays about the same distance in front of point), and the forwards—centre, right wing, left wing and rover. Point and Cover, of course, have the work of checking rushes, and breaking up the combination.

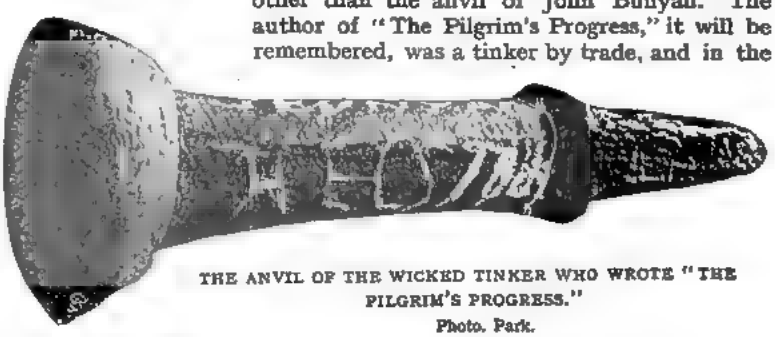
Instead of a ball a round flat rubber disc, called a "puck," is used, and this can be shot with great swiftness, or "lifted" a great height. Nearly all the players wear shin pads, and the goal keeper has specially large ones that come above the knee, and much resemble cricket pads. The stick used has a long, squarish handle, and the blade has a flat face. The puck is not hit, but is "shoved," the lower hand giving the force, and consequently enabling great pressure to be brought to bear.

The whole secret of the game lies in fast skating and good combination. Hockey is rapidly becoming the king of sports out here, and it certainly deserves to be popular.

R. T. FORTT.

### John Bunyan's Anvil.

ANOTHER romance of the sale-room! At Sotheby's famous auction rooms a remarkable memento was recently offered to collectors. This was none other than the anvil of John Bunyan. The author of "The Pilgrim's Progress," it will be remembered, was a tinker by trade, and in the



THE ANVIL OF THE WICKED TINKER WHO WROTE "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."
Photo. Park.

accompanying photograph is seen the

"iron clanging anvil
Banged with hammers"

upon which he wrought. Its shape is somewhat

A NURSERY OF PENGUINS AT CAMPA MENTA, IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.
Photo. by F. Craigie-Halkett.

unusual. In length it measures 2 ft. and its weight is about 60 lb. On the surface is stamped the legend, J. BUNYAN, HEL'STOW, and also the date 1647.

Elstow, formerly Helenstow, which is near St. Neots, was the birthplace of Bunyan. It is interesting to recall that the "wicked tinker," whose name is immortal in the annals of literature, was advised, in early days, that his "real gift laye in ye repayringe of olde kettles."

"PILGRIM."

## *Penguin and Sea-Lion "Rookeries."*

THE Falkland Islands lie, as the map of South America will show, in the South Atlantic, off the south-east extremity of the continent, in the region of Cape Horn. The accompanying photographs illustrate two familiar shore scenes, of rare interest and fascination to naturalists,—portions of the vast "rookeries" of penguin and sea-lions there.

The penguin—a quaint, aquatic bird which in place of wings has oar-like flippers—is widely distributed over the South Atlantic, and is found in certain localities in amazing abundance. The Falkland Islands represent such a locality, and the upper photograph conveys some small idea of a penguin "rookery," or community, there. The birds are essentially gregarious, and live in colonies that number tens of thousands. One of these "rookeries" has thus been described by Professor Moseley:

"At first you try to avoid the nests, but soon find that impossible; then, maddened almost by the pain (for they bite furiously at the legs), stench, and noise, you have recourse to brutality. Thump, thump, goes your stick, and at each blow down goes a bird. Thud, thud, you hear from the men behind you as they kick the birds right and left off the nests, and so you go on for a bit—thump, smash, whack, thud, 'caa, caa, urr, urr,' and the path behind you is strewn with the dead and dying and bleeding. Of course, it is horribly cruel thus to kill whole

A SOUTHERN "NOVASTOSHNAH."
Part of a sea-lion rookery in the Falkland Isles, similar to that in the North Pacific, described by Rudyard Kipling in "The White Seal."
Photo. by F. Craigie-Halkett.

families of innocent birds, but it is absolutely necessary if one is to cross the rookeries."

The sea-lions in the lower pictures are of the Patagonian variety. These extraordinary marine carnivora, though they spend the greater part of the year in their natural home, the boundless deep, come ashore during the breeding season, and likewise form huge "rookeries" or communities. While on the rocks the young are born and reared (and incidentally taught to swim). It is a curious fact that during this period—some three or four months—the males never taste a morsel of food, but are sustained by the ample layer of fat which previous heavy feeding has caused to form under the skin. Readers of Rudyard Kipling's fascinating "Jungle Book" will remember the wonderful story of "The White Seal," which deals with just such a "rookery" of sea-lions as that seen in the photograph—except that Sea-Catch, Matkah, Kotick, and the soft-eyed seal with whom Kotick danced the fire dance on the beach at Lukannon—lived at Novastoshnah, in the Pribiloff Islands of the far north Behring Sea, while those here shown were photographed on the Falkland Isles thousands of leagues to the south.

It is said that in the extreme southern seas the sea-lions sometimes devour the penguins and their eggs. When the men of the first exploring parties in the Antarctic came upon the penguin rookeries, the birds (which had never seen a human form before) evidently considered them to be some new kind of sea-lion, and endeavoured, by hopping awkwardly inland, to lure them from the nests and young. In the ordinary way, of course, the sea-lion feeds upon all kinds of fish, which it pursues through the water with terrific speed, and catches with the most amazing dexterity.

The Falkland Islands themselves are almost entirely in the occupation of sheep-farmers. Their importance as a grazing station can be estimated from the fact that they support upwards of 200,000 sheep. Scotch shepherds have very largely replaced the South American Gauchos, and the islands have acquired quite a homelike appearance. The little capital of Stanley, which accommodates the pastoral population, is strongly reminiscent, with its square, whitewashed, and grey-slated houses, of a small town in the western highlands of Scotland.

"LIMMERSHIN."

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### *How the Chinese play Football.*

FOOTBALL is no new game amongst the Chinese. It is not, of course, played according to Association rules, but it resembles, in many ways, the good old English game. A wicker basket is substituted for the leather football, and the object of the game is to carry this basket into the opponent's end of the town. This is often accomplished by stealth, as well as by brute force. There are no goals, and no "half-time," but the game is continued until one side has accomplished its purpose, and often lasts for days.

The players are placed in various parts of the town, each provided with a whistle. By means of this they call assistance when being tackled. They care not for their legs, and throwing caution to the winds, they devote all their strength and energy to the game. The only precaution taken by players in the field is for the preservation of their pigtails. To come in contact with this ornament of the head would no doubt be counted a "foul."

All the streets in the town in which the football match is to take place are cleared, and the combatants' friends sit at their windows to watch the fun, if the ball should come their way.

L. W. D.

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### *The Edinburgh Academicals.*

NO Scottish Rugby club can boast of a more brilliant football career than the Edinburgh Academicals.

It is to the Academicals that Scotland owes the introduction of Rugby football in 1855, and it is only natural that the "Acies" should be one of the most popular teams in Scotland.

In the early seventies the championship usually ended in a keen struggle between the Glasgow and Edinburgh Academicals, and both teams can boast of being champions a good number of times.

Other teams then forged ahead, and from 1880 to 1885 the Edinburgh Academicals were not so much to the front as they had been, although the champion teams of that time—West of Scotland and Edinburgh Institution F.P.s—had always a hard fight with the "Acies."

The Glasgow Academicals again coming to the fore in 1885–86, the Academicals of the East, never liking to be ousted by their rivals, played better than before, and in 1887–88 they were once more at the head of affairs.

Again, for four years in succession from 1897–98 this position was kept, but 1901–1902 saw the championship pass into the hands of Edinburgh University, who held it for three seasons (twice equal) till the Glasgow Academicals made a great effort last season, and once more carried off premier honours to the West.

R. O. MACKAY.

# COMPETITIONS FOR JANUARY.

*Last day for sending in, January 18. (Foreign and Colonial Readers, March 18.)*

**NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:—**

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——, Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work. Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be sent in a separately stamped envelope.

Every prize-winner is requested to apply for his prize. In the event of the prize offered for competition not appealing to the winner of the same, some other article of similar value may be chosen from our advertisement pages, or from the catalogues of such firms as advertise in THE CAPTAIN.

Address envelopes and postcards as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, 12 Burleigh Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by January 18.

The Results will be published in March.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the Editor's decision is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"What I hope to do in 1906, and why."***—Write a short essay, not exceeding 400 words in length, stating some particular end or object which you wish to achieve during 1906, and giving your reason for wishing to do so. The *matter* contained in the essay will receive higher marks than the *manner* in which it is put. In considering an essay, allowance will be made for the competitor's age. Prize: A New Columbia Graphophone, value £2 5*s*. (See Prizes page.)

Age limit: Twenty-one.

No. 2.—***"Missing Building."***—On an advertisement page you will find a design composed of numerous small squares jumbled together. Cut out these squares neatly, and paste them on to a piece of card-board so as to form the silhouette of a well-known building. Prizes: Two "Acme" Telescopes, supplied by Stanley Pearce, value 15*s*. each. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 3.—***"January Celebrities."***—Write an essay, not exceeding 400 words, describing the qualities and achievements of some notable man or woman born in the month of January. In looking round for a subject for your essay do not be guided merely by the names you find in the well-known almanacs. Do not neglect these publications, but also try to think of a celebrated man or woman who is at present looming large before the public eye, but whose name does not appear in the almanacs. Prizes. Three of Messrs. Bright and Son's "Aldwych" Stamp Albums, value 12*s*. 6*d*. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 4.—***"What to Make During the Holidays."***—Describe, as briefly as possible, how to make some useful article, the putting together of which will occupy indoor hours during the holidays in a pleasant and useful manner. Marks will be awarded for (*a*) the usefulness of the article suggested, (*b*) the simplicity of its construction, and (*c*) the cheapness of the materials and tools required. Prizes: Class I., A superior Russian Iron Magic Lantern, made by Messrs. W. C. Hughes, value £4 4*s*.; Class II., a Sandow Developer, value 12*s*. 6*d*.; Class III., a pair of Sandow Grip Dumb-bells, value 10*s*. 6*d*. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 5.—***"Photographic Competition."***—Send a print from your best negative. Photographs must be original, *i.e.*, not copied from the work of others. Neatness in mounting will be taken into consideration. Prize (in each class): Photographic Apparatus to the value of 10*s*. 6*d*.

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 6.—***"Drawing of an Ornament."*** Send a sketch of an ornament, in pen, pencil, or water-colours. Prizes: Three of Messrs. George Rowney and Co.'s Paint Boxes. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***March 18.*** By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5*s*. will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial January Competitions."

*12 BURLEIGH STREET,*
*STRAND, LONDON.*

**A** scamper of feet, excited exclamations, a rush of cold air which sends Aunt Matilda shivering into the drawing-room, another icy draught coming from the opposite direction which catches Uncle Charles full in his fat, red neck and makes him cough, the back door banged, the front door banged—and the annual ceremony has been satisfactorily completed, while in the distance some church clock solemnly booms out the last notes of TWELVE. Aye, it is a good old-fashioned custom, this letting the Old Year out and the New Year in. It is a thrilling, thoughtful moment. The Old Year, with all its happenings, its tears, its laughter, its excitements, its evil deeds and its good deeds, has *gone*—and the New Year is with us. Twelve entire months are spread out before our eyes like a snowy tablecloth for the first time unfolded. And everybody wishes you "A Happy New Year!"—even people who can't bear you.

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**I love** these old customs. I say, keep them up. By religiously observing all the good old customs of the year, one helps to keep oneself young and healthy-minded. Keep them up, I say. Keep up May-Day; keep up the Harvest Home, the Fifth of November, and, above all, Christmas Day. Let Bank Holidays flourish and increase; let us have another, by all means—as has been suggested—between the first Monday in August and Christmas; or between Christmas and Easter. Why shouldn't St. Valentine's Day—February 14—be kept as a holiday, for example? We don't take life cheerfully enough in this country—we don't get enough laughter and amusement. We don't sing and dance and play enough. When we do play, we play at the wrong times—some of us. Once I lived next door to a girls' school, and the dear little girls used to get up and practise at *six* in the morning. At that time the "Valse Bleu" was all the rage. Well, a piece of that kind is well enough at a dance, but when you hear a girl of ten struggling painfully through it at *six* o'clock on a chill winter's morning (as I have done), you get to hate the sound of the "Valse Bleu" as you never hated the sound of a piece before. Though, as far as I am concerned, there are several hackneyed compositions I have learned to loathe to a far greater extent. The "Henry VIII. dances" take a high place in that category.

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**When** we dance, too, we dance at the wrong times—some of us. In Spain the merry peasants assemble of an evening in the open air and dance with natural *abandon* and innocent zest. The spectators laugh and sing, and the dark-eyed Petronilla gazes sweetly at Pedro the Ploughman as he foots it right nimbly on the green. Now, if an *English* ploughman feels a craving to disport himself in this way, he is generally in the village ale-house (and generally out of it before he's quite through with his dance). His friends tell him to "go 'ome and sleep it orf," and the village constable warns him that he'll be "taken somewhere where he won't like" if he doesn't "give over"; and, when the festive ploughman finally does reach "'ome," he possibly gets a bang on the head from a frying-pan wielded by his irate wife. And so the poor, light-hearted fellow learns in course of time, by painful experience, that people don't like him to dance—that, in fact, they strongly object to it—or any other display of animal spirits on his part. In Spain they take a more reasonable view of such things.

**No**; we are a gloomy country, there's no doubt about that, and that's why we ought to make the most of the little festivals that we do attempt to keep up in a moderately hilarious manner. Then again, there ought to be far more amateur acting. There is hardly anybody who, if put to it, couldn't play some kind of part or other. Of course, we are an undemonstrative, sulky sort of people, and we hate putting ourselves forward and letting ourselves go. Although many of us are quite capable actors, we are so retiring and shy that, instead of amusing ourselves and hosts of our friends by getting up theatricals at frequent and regular intervals, we prefer to pay our money to see very mediocre players in very mediocre plays. Personally, I am always hugely amused by amateur theatricals, which are great fun both for those in front of, as well as for those behind, the footlights. Any kind of wholesome pursuit that takes us out of ourselves and tends to make us brighter and more companionable, is to be commended. Think of the dreary, dragging winter evenings in English villages. Think of the dulness of the average country town. No wonder country people seem behind-the-times and "provincial" to Londoners. They don't get enough fun; they live too much in a groove. A little enterprise, a little organisation, are all that is needed to get things going in a village and give people something to look forward to and talk about. And then it is highly desirable that complete accord should reign among the promoters of amateur dramatic "shows." The most crying sins of amateurs are selfishness and vanity. If such companies are to be successful, the members must learn to be self-effacing—to take what is given to them. Depend upon it, if they possess genuine talent their chance will come in time. They only create unpleasantness, and embarrass the leading spirits of the concern, by claiming more important *rôles* than can be conveniently allotted to them.

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**To return** briefly to the subject of the New Year, don't you think that the last moments of December should inspire us with thoughtfulness? I have talked of the jollity that prevails on New Year's Eve, but I do not suggest that what I have described is the best way of ushering in the New Year. It is a wholesome and good thing to attend a Watch Night Service, and welcome the New Year in, with due solemnity, upon one's knees. Then will you go out into the keen midnight air braced up to do your very best in the twelve months ahead of you. The Old Year has gone "beyond recall," and the New Year lies before you like a clean slate. It is a good thing to begin the New Year fitly. As in a sprint race, getting off from the mark well is half the battle. This is worth thinking about when the night of December the Thirty-First arrives, and you hear the call of the bells at half-past eleven.

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**"The Old Fag's Dinner Fund."**—Our readers became aware of the opening of this Fund when the December CAPTAIN was published on November 22, and as we go to press with the present number (on December 2) we are able to announce that, though only nine days have elapsed since the Fund was started, a very large number of Sixpences have already arrived—this, too, in spite of the fact that our appeal reached readers at an awkward time of the term, when pocket-money is "short." From one "house" in a public school alone we have received no less than a hundred and one sixpences—all voluntarily subscribed. With the various sums have come many charming letters hailing the Fund as affording a practical opportunity of doing one's poor neighbours a turn. In our next number I shall publish a list of the subscribers. Most of you will read these words on or about December 20, but *don't imagine it's too late* to send in more sixpences. Every sixpence will give a poor boy or girl a good tuck-in on Christmas Day; every sixpence will mean all the difference between shivering in a poverty-stricken home and laughing with sheer satisfaction over the good fare provided in a well-warmed hall. When Christmas morning breaks there will be so many the more youngsters happy on account of our Sixpenny Fund. This is a thought that should inspire you to do whatever lies in your power to help those to whom, on a cold December day, a square meal is the very best thing Life can offer. Meanwhile, as regards those who have already replied to my appeal—with my beaver hat in my hand, young ladies and gentlemen, I beg to subscribe myself your most obliged and obedient servant.

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**School Sports**. It will be remembered that in the September CAPTAIN I recorded the results of the athletic sports at King William's College, Isle of Man, in which

E. G. BUTCHER,

who won every event at the last Athletic Sports of King Edward VI. Grammar School, Totnes. His best performance was 11⅘ sec. for the hundred yards.

every event was won by E. R. S. Taylor. Another boy to accomplish this remarkable feat is E. G. Butcher, of King Edward VI.'s Grammar School, Totnes. I give his performances in the following table.

KING EDWARD VI. GRAMMAR SCHOOL, TOTNES.

Half-Mile.—E. G. Butcher, 2 min. 41⅘ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—E. G. Butcher, 65 sec.
220 Yards.—E. G. Butcher, 28⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—E. G. Butcher, 11⅘ sec.
High Jump.—E. G. Butcher, 4 ft.
Long Jump.—E. G. Butcher, 16 ft. 7½ in.
Cricket Ball.—E. G. Butcher, 74 yd.

It will be noticed that Butcher accomplished nothing especially remarkable either in times or distances, but his excellent "all-roundness" deserves particular notice.

In the Freshmen's Sports (not long concluded, as I write) at Oxford and Cambridge, there were several good performances by old public-schoolmen. At Cambridge, for example, the Half Mile was won by T. H. Just, of St. Paul's and Trinity, in 2 min. 3⅘ sec., this being an improvement of 7⅘ sec. on his school time for the same distance. Just also won the Mile at the same meeting. The Mile at Oxford was won by S. P. L. Lloyd, of South Eastern College, Ramsgate, and Magdalen, in 4 min. 47 sec., which is 2 sec. better than the school record which he set up before leaving Ramsgate. Another good performance at Oxford was that of A. M. Stevens, who won the hammer event with a throw of 124 ft. 8 in. Stevens, however, is not an English public-schoolman, but has come to Balliol from Yale, U.S.A.

At Cambridge, K. G. Macleod, of Fettes and Pembroke, won two events in capital style, doing the 100 yd. in 10⅘ sec., and clearing 23 ft. ⅘ in. in the Long Jump. I append belated lists of sports results from two other schools:

## School Sports Results, 1905.

BRIGHTON COLLEGE.

Mile.—A. I. Carr, 4 min. 57⅘ sec.
220 Yards.—A. I. Carr, 26⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—W. B. Blatch, 11⅘ sec.
Hurdles.—L. Gaisford, 19⅘ sec.
High Jump.—A. I. Carr, 4 ft. 10⅘ in.
Long Jump.—A. I. Carr, 18 ft.
Cricket Ball.—S. A. Wheeler, 92 yd. 7 in.
Weight.—F. A. Parkyn, 30 ft. 6 in.
Hammer.—F. A. Parkyn, 68 ft. 1 in.

GROCERS' COMPANY'S SCHOOL, HACKNEY DOWNS.

Mile.—C. J. Fitzhenry, 5 min. 26⅘ sec.
Half-Mile.—F. D. Heppell, 2 min. 22 sec.
Quarter-Mile.—F. D. Heppell, 60⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—E. J. Coombs, 11⅘ sec.

S. P. L. LLOYD,

who set up a school record for the mile at the last Athletic Sports of South Eastern College, Ramsgate, and recently won the same event at the Freshmen's Sports at Oxford.

Photo by Elliott and Fry

THE LATE REV. J. M. BACON, M.A., F.R.A.S.,

the famous aeronaut whose narrative of the exciting incidents of his first ascent appears in the present number. Mr. Bacon was a scientist of much note, and took part in three Eclipse Expeditions of the British Association, to Lapland, India, and North Carolina. His investigations embraced such subjects as acoustics and meteorology; but it was as a great balloonist that he was chiefly known to fame. Among his notable books were "By Land and Sky," and "The Dominion of the Air." He died in January 1904, and the tale which appears in the present number of THE CAPTAIN was one of the last he wrote. Of this story it is only fair to remark that he observed: "it must not be taken too literally as one of my adventures."

Hurdles.—F. W. Hamilton, 19⅘ sec.
High Jump.—F. W. Hamilton, 4 ft. 11¼ in.
Long Jump.—F. W. Hamilton, 17 ft.
Cricket Ball.—E. R. Gough, 75 yd. 2 ft. 10 in.

## Books for Christmas Presents.

—Our reviewers having sifted the wheat from the tares, the following list may be taken as a reliable guide as to what is good by Captainites purchasing books in Christmas week:

*Hugh Rendall.* By Lionel Portman. (Alston Rivers, 6s.)

*The Yarn of Old Harbour Town.* By W. Clark Russell. (Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

*Practical Sea-Fishing.* By P. L. Haslope. (Upcott Gill, 3s. 6d. net.)

*Old Tales from Rome.* By Alice Zimmern. (Fisher Unwin, 5s.)

*All Abroad.* By B. A. Clarke. (Ward, Lock and Co., 2s. 6d.)

*Bevis: The Story of a Boy.* By Richard Jefferies. (Duckworth and Co., 6s.)

*A King's Comrade.* By C. W. Whistler. (T. Nelson and Sons, 5s.)

*Red Dickon, the Outlaw.* By Tom Bevan. (T. Nelson and Sons, 2s. 6d.)

*In Northern Seas.* By E. Everett Green. (T. Nelson and Sons, 3s. 6d.)

*The Vinland Champions.* By Ottilie A. Liljencrantz. (Ward, Lock and Co., 5s.)

*Bluebell and the Sleepy King.* By Aubrey Hopwood and Seymour Hicks. (C. A. Pearson, 5s.)

*A Soldier of Japan.* By Captain F. S. Brereton. (Blackie and Sons, 5s.)

*A Little Boy Lost.* By W. H. Hudson. (Duckworth and Co., 3s. 6d.)

*The Romance of Mining.* By Archibald Williams. (C. A. Pearson, 5s.)

*Heroes of Iceland.* By Allen French. (D. Nutt, 5s.)

*Two Boys in War Time.* By John Finnemore. (C. A. Pearson, 2s. 6d.)

*The Luck of the Fairfaxes.* By Katharine Tynan. Collins, 6s.)

## New Zealanders' Football Song.

If you are asked to sing a song at a Christmas gathering, try the company with this ditty, "On the Ball," which you will find in the

January *C. B. Fry's Magazine.* There is an opportunity for plenty of lusty whooping in the refrain that will, no doubt, be appreciated by such Captainites as, like Mr. Box, in *Cox and Box*, don't sing, but "sometimes join in a chorus."

## As You Like It—and I Don't.

All the world will waltz
And all the men and women simply love it:
They have their methods and their notions of 't;
And sometimes man will suffer many pangs,—
His qualms being seven twinges. At first, the coyness,
Nervously groping for his partner's waist.
Then the first few prances with his partner
And victim like-to-be, marking quick-time,
Unwilling to set forth. And then the impulse,
Sudden and pressing, from another couple
Made from behind and shrewdly. Then a twirling
Full of strange scenes, and blended in a blur;
Chaos within him; upsets and bumpings around,
Blindly and desperately cannoning
E'en among the violins. And then the swimming
In a mad sea of arms and legs and skirts,
With eyes aflame and face of awful hue,
Full of wild thoughts and utter helplessness—
And so he does his waltz. The sixth twinge shifts
Into the cool and longed-for supper-room,
With cup and sandwich in a trembling hand,
His collar limp, his front a hopeless pulp,
His whole self spent: he none the less attends
His cast-iron partner, brings her this and that,
And gobbles what he can. Last scene of all,
That ends this sad, pathetic history,
Is carriage, home and bed, and mere oblivion;
*Sans* strength, *sans* care, *sans* life, *sans*—everything.

ROBERT C. THARP.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**Inquirer** has a lot of silver paper or tinfoil which he wants to get rid of. I do not think this has any marketable value. Some years ago I said—misled, of course, by a member of the staff (the Art-Editor, probably)—that Mr. Whiteley, of Westbourne Grove, bought silver paper. Thereafter, for some days, the Westbourne Grove postmen fairly staggered under the weight of silver paper transmitted to Mr. Whiteley by CAPTAIN readers anxious to turn an "honest brown." Naturally, I got a sharp letter from Mr. Whiteley stating that he did *not* buy silver paper, and requesting me to tell my readers so. This recalls to my mind a still older experience of a similar kind. A good many years ago I was helping on a popular weekly paper, and our readers were always asking us where they could sell old coins, books, &c. The coin people we used to refer to a firm in Gracechurch Street, and the book people to the late Mr. Bernard Quaritch, of Piccadilly, the famous dealer in valuable tomes. After a time Mr. Quaritch, with (as I imagine) tears in his eyes, implored us not to give his address to our readers. It seemed that all sorts of rubbish not worth fourpence had been fired at him from all parts of the country. And the worst of it was he *had to pay return postage on it.* The coin firm, however, didn't say a word. Old coins are generally worth more than old books.

**E. A. Megginson** has been puzzled by the various and peculiar names applied to different forms of wrestling which have lately been so much in evidence as public spectacles. "Catch-as-catch-can" is the Lancashire style, in which all parts of the body are used, including the legs. It is, therefore, permissible in this mode of wrestling to trip and hold with the legs. "Græco-Roman" is the style in which most of the public wrestlers at the music-halls, and other places of entertainment, perform. According to this method, no holds are allowed below the waist, tripping and leg-holds being barred. "Jiu-Jitsu" is the now famous Japanese style of wrestling, the main principle of which is the scientific grasping of an opponent in such a manner as to render him helpless, and liable to sustain a broken limb should he offer resistance to a hold. These are the only three styles which my correspondent mentions, but there are, of course, several others, notably the Cumberland and Westmoreland style, which may be witnessed at Grasmere and in the Lake District—the true home of English wrestling—and also the Cornish and Devonshire style. In this latter case the wrestlers wear curious canvas jackets which are grasped when taking hold

**W. Stanley Roberts** sends me a suggestion concerning the speed of motor-cars which might be worth the attention of the authorities. He proposes that medical men, when travelling to attend a patient, should be allowed to exceed the ordinary limit. He points out that fire-engines, when travelling to a fire, are driven at top-speed, and rightly. It certainly seems fair that a doctor, whose prompt attendance at a case may be the means of saving life, should be allowed to drive a car at a specially rapid pace, but it is obvious that if this were allowed by law, the abuse of the privilege would be easy. I have heard, however, that doctors in America have the necessary permission granted to them, and should be glad to hear from an American reader whether this is really so.

**"Grocer."**—I do not like anonymous letters; you should have enclosed your name and address. To obtain a post in a London bank it is necessary to procure the nomination of a director. This is, however, not a very difficult matter. The only exam. which you would be required to pass is one in the usual English subjects. No foreign language is included, nor do you require to have a knowledge of the classics.

**South Africa.**—Mr Warner asks me to tell you that the first English team to visit South Africa was Major Wharton's in the winter of 1888-89. The second team was W. W. Read's in 1891-92; the third Lord Hawke's, 1895-96; the fourth also Lord Hawke's, 1898-99. The present

M.C.C. combination is therefore the fifth. J. H. Sinclair is, Mr. Warner considers, the best all-round cricketer in South Africa at the present time.

**"Spes Audiendi"** wants to know if I can tell him the writer, and also the complete words, of some verses which begin as follows:

> An Austrian army awfully arrayed
> Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.
> Cossack commanders cannonading come,
> Dealing destruction, devastating doom.

I fancy these lines were written by Defoe, but perhaps some reader may be able to complete the poem and supply the name of its author. "Spes audiendi" has chosen a wonderfully erudite *nom de plume!*

**"Herald"** is anxious to enter the Herald's College, but I am afraid he will find this, unless he is possessed of considerable influence, a somewhat difficult matter. I have it on the authority of that distinguished gentleman "Richmond Herald" that "appointments to the College of Arms are made by the Crown, by Letters Patent, under the Great Seal, on the nomination of his Grace the Earl Marshal of England."

**Archery.**—F. Le Marie writes asking me to recommend an archery club in the neighbourhood of London. Other readers who may be interested in this little-practised sport may like to know that inquiries on the subject are best addressed to the Honorary Secretary, Royal Toxophilite Society, Archers' Hall, Regent's Park, N.W.

**F. C. Cull.**—The French engine "La France," belonging to the Great Western Railway, is, at present, a very dark blue colour, and not in the standard colours of the Company. Whether she will receive the Great Western uniform at a later date, I cannot say. You had better ask the G.W.R. Locomotive Superintendent, Swindon. Enclose a stamp.

**Taierl.**—The Office Dog swallowed your contribution at one gulp; but by all means keep on pegging away. As regards your query on the subject of prizes in competitions, you are, of course, at liberty to choose any number of separate articles in making up the amount awarded to you.

**C. S. Francis.**—You can obtain a CAPTAIN badge from this office, in gilt metal, price sixpence, for the hat, coat, or watch-chain, and in solid silver, price two shillings, for the hat or watch-chain only.

**"Old Sport."**—If space allows I hope to quote some of the extracts when the cricket season arrives.

**Kathleen H.**—Yes, "Jim Mortimer, Surgeon," is the book-title of the story which appeared in THE CAPTAIN as "The Long 'Un."

**H. W. N. D., R. L. Robertson, F. T. Afridi, and others.**—The "Civil Service Year Book," published by Sheppard and St. John, 76 and 78 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C., price 2*s.*, gives information regarding every branch of the Civil Service.

**T. Howard, "Smith Junior," "Ash," "Noryb" "Exonian," "Well-Wisher," C. J. Smart,** and **G. F. H. Delamere** should send stamped envelopes and repeat their questions, replies to which would not interest the general body of readers.

**THE OLD FAG.**

## "CROCKED."

[BY A CONVALESCENT]

IN the last sublime, unnerving
  Stages of an equal fray,
Fighting, barging, feinting, swerving—
  All I knew—I broke away!
On—with gasping foemen near me—
  Till the goal-line gleamed before!
While around outrang, to cheer me,
  Thunder of triumphant roar!

Sudden came the Full-back hurling,
  And we "cannoned," fair and square,
With a shock that sent me whirling—
  Out of action into . . . where? . . .
Hands—despite my poor resistance—
  Felt my limbs and pawed my bones;
Voices hailed me from a distance—
  *Me*—in gentle, soothing tones!

Something in those voices filled me
  With a feeling like to shame,
So I swore that, if it killed me,
  I would struggle through the game.

This while I was lying limper
  Than a scarecrow!—but I hear
That a feeble, puny whimper
  Hardly made my meaning clear.

Hoisted to my feet, I swore most
  Fearfully a fearful swear;
Blindly flung myself head foremost
  At a scrum that wasn't there!
Ah! I knew I was no good then,
  Useless hulk, like so much lead!
And I thought I understood then
  What it felt like to be dead!

But, when off the field they bore me,
  Nine stone-nine of helpless pain,
All the darkness lifted o'er me,
  And the daylight cleared my brain.
Then I knew my true condition,
  And—so far from being shocked—
With exemplary submission
  And a grin, I murmured "*Crocked!*"

ARTHUR STANLEY.

# Results of November Competitions.

**No. I.—"Scholarship Appointment Competition."**
—Result will be announced in the February No.

**No. II.—"British Isles Rugby XV."**

One age limit: Twenty-one.

WINNER OF W. J. BASSETT-LOWKE AND CO.'S MODEL LOCOMOTIVE: W. F. Curtis, c/o Mrs. G. Edmunds, Cheap Street, Sherborne, Dorset.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: A. J. Parry, 130 Carlisle Street, Cardiff; J. Leonard Cadoux, Chandos House, St. Peter's Road, Leicester.

HONOURABLE MENTION: N. G. Touch, W. B. Cairns, H. Bucknell, Thomas Dobson, W. Lismore, J. Wall, K. D. Child, W. M. Wallace, F. B. Julian, Owen Squires, Frank Taylor.

**No. III.—"'Captain' Birthday Book."**

*CLASS I.* (No age limit.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL OR HOCKEY-STICK: C. T. Down, Spearpoint, Ashford, Kent.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: R. L. Ormiston, Cameronian Cottage, Brynhyfryd, Swansea; Constance H. Greaves, 15 Powis Square, Brighton.

HONOURABLE MENTION: C. Maud Heddy, Edith May Nanson, A. A. Kerridge, May MacCowen Hall, Lucy Fuller, Ellen West, Charles Reed.

*CLASS II.* (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL OR HOCKEY-STICK: Albert Albrow, 43 Hinton Road, Loughboro' Junction, S.E.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: V. T. Down, Spearpoint, Ashford, Kent.

HONOURABLE MENTION: G. W. Bailey, Horace V. Levin, Percival Dacre, Gladys A. W. von Straiendorff, Lottie Tucker, Joyce Hunter, Ethel M. Parsons, M. W. Fuller, M. V. Woodgate, E. M. Gough, Mary Child.

*CLASS III.* (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL OR HOCKEY-STICK: K. T. Down, Spearpoint, Ashford, Kent.

HONOURABLE MENTION: A. G. Papillon, James Haddock, Cyril C. Reay, Bernard Hickson, Zillah Gray, Isabel Victal, Doris Stafford, George G. Milne, Emmeline d'Auvergne.

**No. IV.—"Photographic Competition."**

*CLASS I.* (No age limit.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: James M. Swanson, 20 Victoria Street, Aberdeen.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Harry W. Witcombe, Castlebrook, Holland Road, Maidstone.

HONOURABLE MENTION: James E. T. S. Hilton, T. Pape, Janet R. Fooks, E. J. Sparkes-Madge, J. T. Roberts, R. W. Copeman.

*CLASS II.* (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: Francis G. Beeson, 139 Oxford Road, Gloucester.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: C. V. Monier-Williams, 3 Barby Road, Rugby.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. Seward Gales, W. E. Morley, A. D. Gill, W. E. Gundrill, George Chance, T. E. W. Strong, Benjamin Corbyn, Norman Cowell, A. C. Denison, George H. Webbet, William J. Parkyn, Bernard Meadrum.

*CLASS III.* (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: Sidney H. Radcliffe, 8 Winslade Road, Brixton, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE IS AWARDED TO: Carslake Winter Wood, Kenwick, Paignton, S. Devon.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Dorothy Alice Hilton, C. Cotton, David B. Pryde, Harold Morgan, T. M. Horsley, Mildred Richardson, H. L. Barrow.

**No. V.—"November Celebrities."**

*CLASS I.* (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL: W. H. Gillman, Brittox, Devizes, Wilts.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: H. E. Haylock, "The Hollies," Thurgarton, Notts.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. F. Curtis, Andrey E. Foll, R. O. Merton, Nora Blake, John Thomas, William Kentish, Helen C. Stone, Martin Goult, C. H. Shepherd, A. E. N. Colebrook, A. Tapply, T. W. Spikin.

*CLASS II.* (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL: Swinburn Stephenson Cherry, 20 Finlay Drive, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: C. Murgatroyd, 43 Blackburn Avenue, Bridlington; Eric Gedge, 8 Henleaze Gardens, Westbury, Bristol.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. B. Kincaid, Frank Thomas, Evelyn Siddons, E. J. Morris, Agnes Macmeeken, P. T. Lovejoy, Walter Eite, W. L. Davies, A. J. Turner, E. G. Urwin, E. C. Field, Edward Taylor.

*CLASS III.* (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF FOOTBALL: George Gordon Milne, Sturge House, 32 Bow Road, London, E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: F. E. Newsome, James Highet, Garnet Lampard, E. D. E. Harland, L. F. Ellington, -Wright.

**No. VI.—"Consolation Competition."**

*CLASS I.* (No age limit.)

WINNER OF FRETWORK OUTFIT: G. A. Smythe, Moreland House, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

HONOURABLE MENTION: D. Campbell, Charles A. Gibson, D. George, J. V. Morris.

*CLASS II.* (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF FRETWORK OUTFIT: H. M. J. Burdett, Poltimore Rectory, Exeter.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Thomas Bones, jun., 46 High Street, Cheshunt, Herts; Alexr. L. Ogilvy, Middle Manse, Coatbridge, N.B.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Frank D. Barton, Norman Johnson, L. Thomson, F. A. Kenneth, Nora Ffrench Blake, Dorothy Nanson, J. J. Simpson, Leonard C. Wheatham, William Morgan, Fred Hill.

*CLASS III.* (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF FRETWORK OUTFIT: Stanley Tignet, 17 St. Stephen's Road, Bow, E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: A. W. H. Cooper, James Gray, Cecil Kilroy, G. S. A. Nicholson, Eric S. Fry, Gladys E. P. Green, H. B. Champion, H. R. Foxott, W. H. S. Curryner.

**Foreign and Colonial Readers.**—(October.)

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: Fitzherbert Howell, 62 Henry Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Henry James (British Guiana).

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: John Allison, 239 Albert Road, Woodstock, Cape Colony.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. H. Hedding (Cape Colony), Harold S. Wurtell (Canada).

No. IV.—WINNER OF 5s.: Harry S. Blinkworth, Gaya, Western Bengal, India.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. R. Thompson (Cape Colony).

***Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of the "Captain," "Strand," "Sunday Strand," "Wide World," "Technics," "C. B. Fry's Magazine," or one of the following books—"Jim Mortimer, Surgeon," "J. O. Jones," "Tales of Greyhouse," "Acton's Feud," "The Heart of the Prairie."***

# Comments on the November Competitions.

No. II.—The correct list, decided by vote, is as follows:

*Full Back.*—H. B. Winfield (Wales), or W. B. Forrest (Scotland). Equal number of votes.

*Three-quarters.* L. M. McLeod (Scotland), B. MacLear (Ireland), E. T. Morgan (Wales), J. E. Raphael (England).

*Halves.* R. M. Owen (Wales), P. R. Munro (Scotland), or E. D. Simson (Scotland). Equal number of votes.

*Forwards.* V. H. Cartwright (England), A. Tedford (Ireland), D. R. Bedell-Sivright (Scotland), C. E. Allen (Ireland), A. F. Harding (Wales), R. S. Stronach (Scotland), J. J. Hodges (Wales), J. Wallace (Ireland).

No. III. Very excellent were the artistic efforts and apt quotations submitted for the last instalment of our "Birthday Books," and we congratulate certain prize-winners who have contested their places so keenly month by month. By next Christmas we hope to have this "Birthday Book" ready.

No. IV.—The photographs in Classes II. and III. were below the usual standard, but some very good work was submitted in Class I.

No. V.—The usual large numbers of excellent essays were sent in. The favourite "celebrities" were Edward VII., Earl of Chatham, Martin Luther, Charles I., William III., Lord Russell, and John Bright. Competitors should bear in mind that the standard of these essays is a high one and that therefore spelling and grammatical mistakes spoil any chance of success. They should also pay strict attention to the age limit in each class.

No. VI. The "Favourite Competitions" chosen were Essays, Drawing, Birthday Book, Hidden Towns, &c., and lists of Cricketers and Footballers. The essays on these subjects did not reach a very high standard, and, in many cases, there was a decided lack of neatness and good spelling. It was a great pleasure to award prizes to those who had never been so fortunate as to gain them before.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

# HAMLEY'S NOVELTIES.

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Box containing 1 Flying Sausage, 1 Flying Snake, 2 Howling Babies, 2 Coons, 1 Balloon, 2 Blow-out Cigar, 1 Fife, 1 Flying Serpent. All of these blow out and squeak, causing roars of laughter. Price 1/-; Post Free, 1/3.

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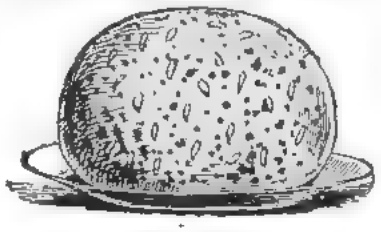

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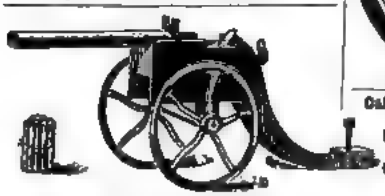

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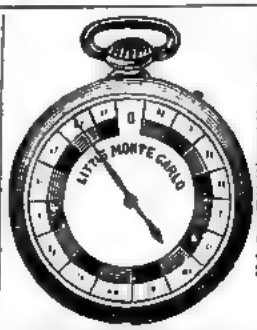


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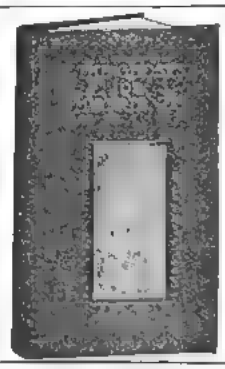

### The Ghost of My Friends.

A book for collecting the Autographs of your friends. The paper is then folded in two, causing most remarkable results. Price, bound in art-cloth, 1/- Post Free, 1/2. Bound in leather, 2/- Post Free 2/3.

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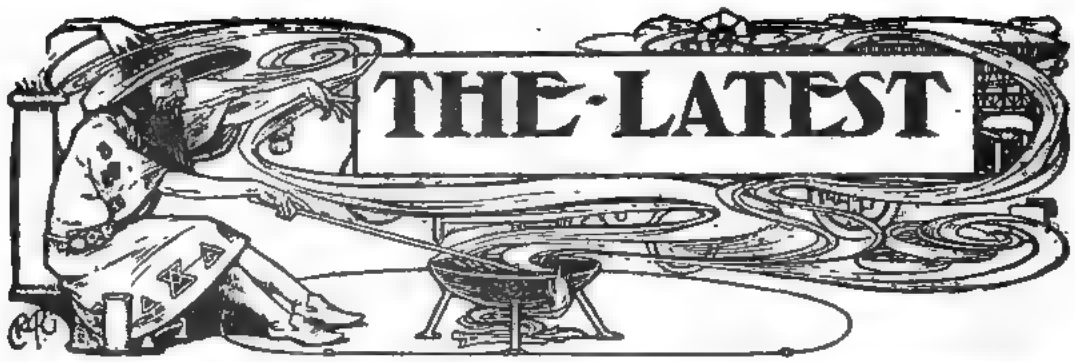
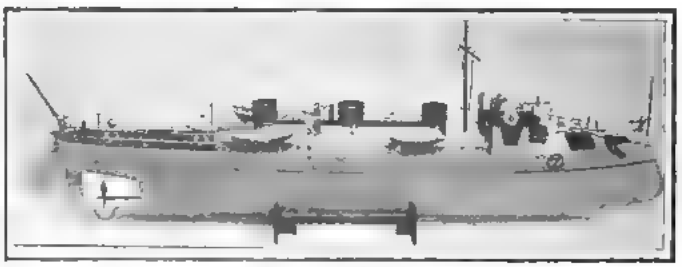



### The Latest in Yawns.

As this number of THE CAPTAIN goes to press, the third centenary of "gunpowder, treason, and plot" has not long been celebrated. November 5, however, is not merely the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot: it is likewise the birthday of the Zoo's celebrated Hippopotamus, whose most recent portrait is here reproduced. "Guy Fawkes" (as she was named, despite the fact that she belongs to the gentle sex) was born at Regent's Park in 1872, and is, therefore, 33 years old. But though domiciled in the Zoo for all these years, the unwieldy monster cannot be considered properly domesticated. She is so far tame that her keeper can exact obedience to his commands, up to a certain point. She will allow him even to fondle her huge, flabby tongue and hold it in his hand, like a lump of butcher's meat. But wariness is very necessary in dealing with her, and strangers who are admitted into her cage are warned to keep near the gate, lest the treacherous brute, with a sudden rush, should cut off their line of retreat, and then charge. Since the recent death of "Jim," the veteran rhinoceros who had lived in the Gardens for 40 years and more, "Guy Fawkes" has been the *doyen* of the Zoo.



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BORED OR HUNGRY?

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# The Pleasures of Painting

Our colours enable you to do your very best with the brushes. Those offered here are splendid for students and beginners; they are rich and of a good working consistency. Painting is a fine hobby for boys, and if you have not tried it, do not let this winter go by without.

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HOW TO FIND WHEN YOUR TRAIN IS DUE.
A new train indicator recently introduced on the District Railway.

### Is Mine the Next Train?

THE accompanying photograph shows one of the new train indicators just introduced on the District Railway. These are so simple in operation that a detailed description is unnecessary. The numbers appearing beside the names of the terminal stations or routes are painted on glass and illuminated by electric lights in the rear. These numbers always show the destinations of the next three trains. When the first train indicated has left the station the light behind the figure changes. Thus, if the next train goes to Richmond, figure "1" will be illuminated, or, if it is "the train after next," then figure "2" is lit.

### A Railway Yacht.

BY the courtesy of the *Railway Magazine* we are enabled to reproduce the accompanying picture of a sailing railway trolley. The trolley seen in the picture is of the ordinary type, as commonly used by platelayers, and when the wind is favourable a speed of from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour can be attained quite safely by means of the mast and sail. The photograph is by Mr. K. Warry-Sibley.

A SAILING TROLLEY.
In use on the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway.

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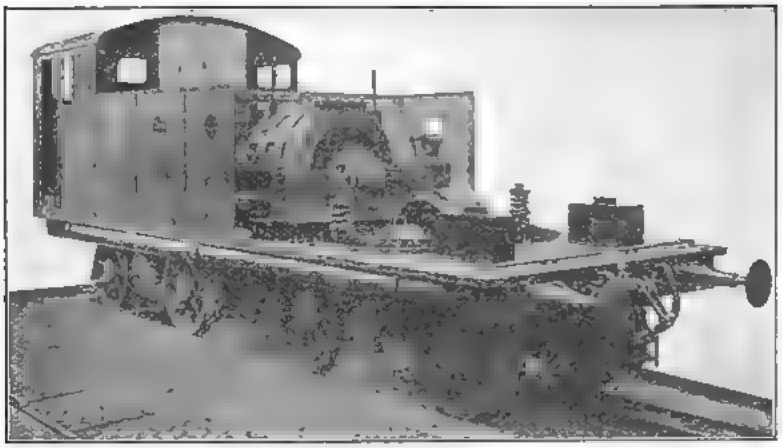


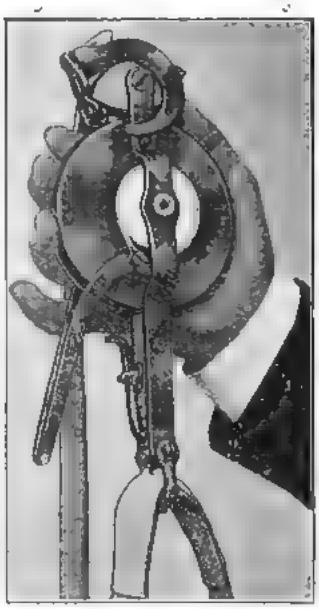
INTERIOR OF THE NEW OERLIKON ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE.

### A remarkable Electric Locomotive.

One of the chief objections to the electrification of railways hitherto devoted to steam traction is the fact that, in most cases, the existing rolling-stock and engines have to be scrapped. This was the case, for instance, with the London underground railways. At the Oerlikon Engineering Works in Switzerland, however, a certain Herr Huber has had built a new electric locomotive which does away, it is claimed, with this objection by enabling the trains formerly hauled by steam to be handled by means of the new motive-power, without alteration. In other words, he proposes to accept the existing methods of traffic organisation, and adapt the new locomotives to the requirements of those methods. His proposal, as carried out by the Oerlikon Company, consists of a locomotive taking a high-pressure single-phase alternating current from one single overhead conductor, and converting it on the locomotive by means of a motor generator or rotary convertor, with a system of adjusting the turning movement of the driving motors by adjusting the voltage of the continuous-current generator on the locomotive, a separate excitation being used. Our illustration from the *Railway Gazette* shows the internal arrangement of this interesting locomotive. The presence of a "converting" plant on the locomotive is said not to render the total weight prohibitive; the weight of one having four driving-axles, and developing 700 horse-power at the rails, being 42 tons. This development in the science of electric traction seems to promise great things.

### Every man his own Rescuer.

The latest form of fire-escape is a portable one, which can be carried in a portmanteau without occupying too much space, thus enabling the owner to be independent of the ordinary public escape. Consequently, it is especially valuable to travellers, who might possibly find themselves shut up in a burning hotel and cut off from the ordinary means of exit by a stampede. The pictures which we reproduce of the Luse Portable Fire Escape almost explain themselves. The hook seen in the first picture is placed on the window sill, where it commands a firm and safe grip. Fastened to this hook is a steel tape, some seventy-five feet in length or more, which is coiled about a roller, and this tape is capable of sustaining a weight of 1000 lb. The speed of descent, it is important to note, can be controlled by means of a friction brake, the band of which surrounds the roller. Thus, as the tape is measured out, the roller revolves within the brake-strap, the latter being controlled by means of a lever gripped in the hand.



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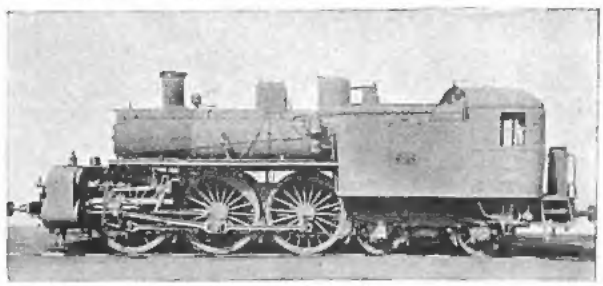

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## LEAGUE NOTES FOR JANUARY 1906.

THIS page is open every month for the insertion of reports and announcements concerning the numerous branches of the Boys' Empire League. Club secretaries are requested to send such notices to the Organising Secretary, B.E.L., at 56 Ludgate Hill, E.C., by the 26th of every month. Forms for this purpose can be obtained on application to the Secretary.

MALTA.—The first indoor meeting of the Sliema Branch of the B.E.L. for the Winter season was held at S. Paul's Institute, Valetta, on the 28th ult. Mr. Savona, the President of the League in Malta, supported by Sir J. Blunt, Mr. Cousin, Chairman of the Management Committee, and other gentlemen, occupied the Chair, and urged the members in a few inspiring words to attend the meetings regularly, and invite their friends to join the League.

We deeply regret to hear that Colonel Gatt, late Royal Malta Artillery, has resigned. Colonel Gatt was a Vice-President of the Malta branch, and took a great interest in its success. Mr. Pullicino, Bc.Litt., and Mr. John Bollanti, both of the Malta University, were unanimously elected Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Several important proposals were discussed and agreed to.

We are always pleased to hear from our comrades in Malta. They do things there in such a business-like way, and withal in a brotherly and kindly spirit that fully bears out the aims and traditions of the League. We heartily commend them for the happy way in which all concerned conduct their branch.

GEORGETOWN, British Guiana.—I have a splendid letter from Mr. Oscar C. Evelyn of 27 Croal Street, in which he laments there is no branch in their Colony of the B.E.L., "which would considerably improve our youths morally, physically, and intellectually." He can see the great good the B.E.L. effects among boys who have just left school, making them "better citizens, and connecting them with the outside world." Mr. Evelyn has formed a correct conception of the aims and objects of the League, and we will gladly assist him in forming a branch of the B.E.L. in British Guiana. Will CAPTAIN readers wishing to join the League kindly communicate with Mr. Evelyn.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.—The Hon. Sec. of the Adelaide branch writes me a long and interesting letter about the daily life of our Colonial comrades in S. Australia. In League matters he is most enthusiastic. He wants "something that would rouse the interests and 'patriotism of all our members the world over." He also sends an account of a banquet celebrating the third anniversary of the Adelaide Branch. About fifty members were present.

A gold badge was presented to Mr. W. Hogg, the President, in recognition of the splendid services he has rendered, and the deep interest he still takes in the League.

The Hon. Sec. makes a very good suggestion, which I should like to see carried out. It is that all Club Secretaries should correspond with each other, exchange hints *re* the managing of the different branches, discuss any points that may affect the welfare of the League, and generally combine in pushing the League ahead. The Colonial members do know how to sustain an interest in the League, and I wish our English branches would take a leaf out of their book. I think the idea of exchanging hints an excellent one, and I hope all our Secretaries will avail themselves of the suggestion. I can assure them prompt and satisfactory replies from all our Colonial Secretaries, whose names and addresses can be got from the B.E.L. Handbook, or on application to headquarters.

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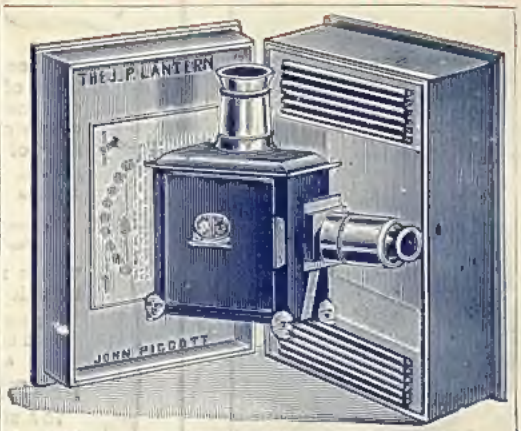


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